ENCOUNTER

CURRENT AFFAIRS – LITERATURE – THE ARTS

APRIL 1989
£1.50

Germany: New Ambitions, Old Problems
Daniel Johnson

Berlin Notebook
Melvin J. Lasky

Afghans & Russians: The Great Game Replayed
Michael Charlton

A 19th-Century Thatcherite
Anthony Hartley

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: HISTORY & BIOGRAPHY
Kenneth Minogue, Gillian Tindall, Eric Sams, Richard Mayne

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Salmagundi

1989 Issues 81-84:

ESSAYS:

GEORGE STEINER, Heidegger Again
CORNELIUS CASTORIADIS, The End of Philosophy
RICHARD RORTY, A Reply to Costoriadis
DENIS DONOGHUE, The Political Town
ROGER SHATTUCK, Art and Ideas
TZVETAN TODOROV, Nationalism
STANISLAW BARANCZAK, Eastern Europe
LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI, Poland
NORMAN BIRNBAUM, The New Germany
JOHN LUKACS, The Example of Simone Weil

INTERVIEWS:

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN, An Interview on South Africa
ARIEL DORFMAN, An Interview on Chile
SUSAN SONTAG, SAUL FRIEDLANDER,
IRVING HOWE, ROBERT NOZICK, On Kitsch

STORIES:
NADINE GORDIMER, JOSE DONOSO, WALTER ABISH,
GUILLERMO CABRERA INFANTE, LUISA VALENZUELA

Special subscription offer to English Readers:
10 Issues, $25.00 (U.S.) / 4 Issues (one year), $12.00 (U.S.)
Send international bank check with name and address to:
SALMAGUNDI
Skidmore College
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866, U. S. A.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITORS
Melvin J. Lasky
Richard Mayne
Anthony Hartley

EXECUTIVE PUBLISHER
Anthony Robinson

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Bryan Healing

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Jacqui Lewis

EDITORIAL CONSULTANTS
Margot Walmsley
J. C. Hall

ADVERTISEMENT DIRECTOR
Antony Pullen

PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISING
Anne Loukes

ASSISTANT TO THE PUBLISHER
Janice Ward

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT
Sue Walker

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Pat Savage

CHIEF ACCOUNTANT
Pat Shutler

ACCOUNTS ASSISTANT
Shirley Lewis

RECEPTION
Alison Loomes

ADVISORY BOARD
Maurice Cranston
D. J. Enright
Gerald Frost
Anthony Hartley
Leo Labedz
Edward Shils
Anthony Thwaite
George Urban
John Weightman

PUBLISHING ADVISERS
Lord Ardwick
Blouke Carus
Lord Cudlipp
Leon Levy
Julio Nunez
Julia Robinson
Jack Watmough
Gary Bogard (chairman)

COVER
David Costa

ENCOUNTER

APRIL 1989 Vol. LXXII No. 4 ISSN 0013-7073

CONTENTS

New Megalomania or Old Patriotism? *Daniel Johnson* 3
The Trials (*story*) *Penelope Bennett* 8
The Great Game Replayed *Michael Charlton* 13
Column *M* 25

POEMS

Lucien Stryk 7, Gareth Calway 24, Stuart Henson 27, Michael Hulse 28, Gerda Mayer 38, Patrick Gillen 43, Desmond Graham 70, Alan Brownjohn 73

MEN & IDEAS

The Oracles & Their Cessation *D. C. Stove* 30

NOTES & TOPICS

Beyond the Veil *Dan Pinck* 39
Burke's Ireland *Max Beloff* 42

SPECIAL BOOK SECTION: HISTORY & BIOGRAPHY

Practitioner of Politics *Kenneth Minogue* 44
The Sands of Time *Gillian Tindall* 50
Superpower Emeritus *Richard Mayne* 52
A Plague o' Both Your Houses *Eric Sams* 58
Books Encountered *R.M.* 61

POINTS OF THE COMPASS

France in Africa *David Perry* 62

EAST & WEST

Berlin Notebook *Melvin J. Lasky* 65

DOCUMENT

The Age of Repentance *Chingiz Aitmatov* 71

THEATRE

Fat Plays or Thin? *Malcolm Rutherford* 74

IN THE MARGIN

A 19th-Century Thatcherite? *Anthony Hartley* 76

BOXES

Arnulf Baring's Geopolitical Fears (*Herbert Kremp*) 5, Between the Sepoy & the Cossack (*Sir John William Kaye*) 20, School for Spy-Writing (*Robert Cecil*) 41

AUTHORS 64 — LETTERS 78 — LIFE & LETTERS 81

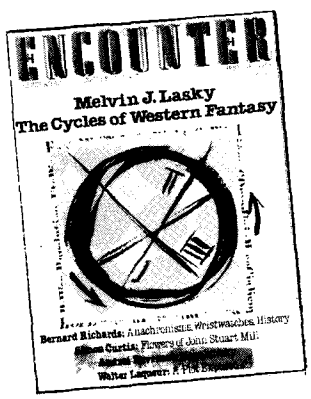
© 1989 by Encounter Ltd. Ten issues a year (July-August and September-October are single issues). Per copy: UK £1.50: USA $3.50. Back numbers £2.50 ($5.00). Postage/packaging: 75p ($2.00). Annual subscriptions: UK £18.00: USA & Canada $39.00 air-freight: India £20.00 by air. Elsewhere £19.00. Address for all departments: Encounter Ltd., 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA (01-434 3063): UK Trade Distributors: Cutlerglen, 13 Newington Industrial Estate, Crampton Street, London SE17 3AZ (01-708 1308). Second-class postage paid at Rahway, NJ. US Postmaster: send address corrections to Encounter, c/o Mercury Airfreight International Ltd Inc., 10B Engelhard Avenue, Avenel, NJ 07001.
Manuscripts are returned only if accompanied by s.a.e. (English stamp) or sufficient International Reply Coupons.

PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT

Malcolm Bradbury, Michael Foot, Henry Kissinger, Cecil Parkinson, Jeane Kirkpatrick, Helmut Schmidt, Rupert Murdoch, Duke of Devonshire, Yehudi Menuhin, John Cleese, Seamus Heaney, Milton Friedman, Mary Kenny, Alexander Chancellor, George Will, Bernard Levin, Michael Heseltine, Max Kampelman, Tom Djilas, Claus Von Bulow, Paul Nitze, Daniel Moynihan, William F. Buckley, Susan Sontag, Ian McShane, Jeffrey Archer, Anthony Thwaite, Kingsley Amis, Gavin Lyall, Lord Carrington, Arnold Beichman, David Frost, Leo Rosten, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Leon Levy, Leszek Kolakowski, Melvyn Bragg, Noel Annan, William Boyd, Robert Elegant, Max Beloff, Harold Lever, Anthony Burgess, David Owen, John O'Sullivan, Brian Redhead, Nikolai Tolstoy, Irving Kristol, Bruno Bettelheim, Conrad Black, Ron Burr, Edward Teller, Eric Rhode, David Pryce-Jones, James Goldsmith, Graham Greene, Octavio Paz, Michael Caine, William Simon, Donald Regan, Gerald Ronson, Andrew Knight, Studs Terkel, Walter Rostow, Peter Parker, David Hockney, Paul Volcker, Lord Bauer, Frank Shakespeare, Roy Jenkins, Harvey Tyson, Auberon Waugh

SEND £13.50 AND SUBSCRIBE FOR THE SAME REASONS THEY DO

There has got to be something special about a magazine that persuades people like these, along with many thousands of others to renew their subscriptions year after year.



The first issue in October 1953 featured prose by Albert Camus and Christopher Isherwood, poems by C. Day Lewis and Edith Sitwell, economics by J K Gailbraith, literary criticism by Stephen Spender. Nearly 35 years later and with loyal subscribers in more than 90 countries, Encounter continues to thrive by presenting – each month – a constantly surprising mix of ideas. Opinions clash – important issues of contemporary life are debated and analysed – with poets and philosophers, journalists and historians, politicians and artists arguing it out together.

Take advantage of our special offer.

Send us your payment, £13.50 (US$ 29.25 USA & Canada, £14.25 elsewhere), this gives you a 25% discount and we will start your subscription with the next available issue.

Give yourself something to think about – Subscribe now!

☐ I enclose my cheque to Encounter Ltd

☐ I wish to pay by credit card ☐ American Express ☐ Access/MasterCard

Valid until _____ Signature _____

☐ Invoice me ☐ Invoice my company

Name _____

Address _____

EXCLUSIVE OFFER 25% OFF

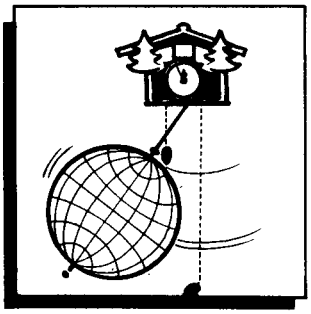
Encounter Ltd, 44 Great Windmill Street, London W1V 7PA, England.
Telephone 01-434 3063.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daniel Johnson

New Megalomania or Old Patriotism?

West Germany Today



THE GERMANS have a long tradition of Jeremiahs. *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*—the German spirit in danger—was the title of a warning by the great critic Ernst Robert Curtius in 1932, signalling the implosion of the open, humanistic, all-embracing German culture which had earned universal respect. Since the Nazi era, when even the worst of their prophecies was hideously exceeded by reality, the heirs of Nietzsche and Spengler have tended to renounce speculation on the present and future of the Germans in favour of post-mortems on their past.

Die deutschen Ängste—to take the title of one recent, self-mocking book—have not been abolished, but they are planetary in scale. Few West Germans, let alone East Germans, consider themselves a danger to anybody. The passive political role which defeat forced upon the new West German state is now a thing of the past, but the mental habits which that brief era inculcated have survived. When Germans get together for a session of dismal contemplation, as some frequently do, they see their nation as the object, not an active subject, of environmental catastrophe, nuclear war, submersion in a flood of immigrants, or whatever the apocalyptic threat may be. It is no longer fashionable to rack one's brains over *"Geist"*, but if there is a threat to that, it is seen as the domination of an Americanised, imported culture.

The last thing most Germans would admit is the possibility that Nietzsche's nightmare—the eternal recurrence of the same—could apply to their history.

In the East Germans' case, the oft-repeated claim that war will never again be launched from German soil has a hollow ring: quite apart from the suppression of the 1953 Berlin rising and the East German role in the crushing of the Prague Spring, Erich Honecker was ready and even eager to assist in a Soviet invasion of Poland at the height of the *Solidarity* crisis in 1981, had General Jaruzelski not persuaded Brezhnev to give martial law a chance. That would have involved East Germans in a repetition of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, and the consequences might have been no less bloody.

West Germans do not think of Honecker's state as a wholly German entity. They take responsibility for it only in so far as they are affected by it in disagreeable ways: divided families, pollution of shared air and rivers, persecution of political dissidents. Their responses are the only ones that seem to deal with the symptoms painlessly: patient negotiation and bribery. But by pushing to the back of their minds this grim reminder, just across the "inner German border", of what is meant, in Ernst Jünger's spine-chilling phrase of the '30s, by the "total mobilisation" of a society, the West Germans blind themselves to their own potential, for harm as well as good. The idea that their own state could be the unwitting cause of havoc in the Western camp is alien to West Germans—and is consequently liable to enrage them.

ARNULF BARING's new book, *Unser neuer Grössenwahn: Deutschland zwischen Ost und West (Our New Megalomania: Germany between East and West)*,[1] is thus a rare bird in recent West German political thought; a warning to the Germans to beware of themselves. The book is an alarming—some would say alarmist—analysis of a diffuse, already ubiquitous mood which Baring calls "the new overestimation" of the Germans by themselves. Perpetually dissatisfied with the *status quo*, impatient heirs to Adenauer's provisional post-War settlement, the Germans are, he thinks, prey to an ambition to reconcile East and West, to relieve Central Europe of the superpowers' armies and of the fear of war. This vision—in which the reunification of the two main fragments of the pre-War *Reich* plays an obscure but significant part—is beginning to resemble the old, fatal German sense of mission, the tragic destiny which already clouded so many first-rate minds in World War I.

Long before Baring's book appeared, voices in Britain and the United States had been warning that a combination of circumstances, among them Gorbachov's ability to present himself as the answer to West German prayers, had once again placed the issues of German reunification, Bonn's role

DANIEL JOHNSON, *a former leader writer for the "Daily Telegraph", has been the paper's Bonn correspondent since summer 1987.*

[1] *Unser neuer Grössenwahn: Deutschland zwischen Ost und West.* By ARNULF BARING in collaboration with VOLKER ZASTROW. DVA (Stuttgart), DM34.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in NATO, and relations with Moscow and Central Europe firmly back on the agenda. After Franz Josef Strauss's visit to Moscow in December 1987, when Gorbachov appeared to agree with the Bavarian Premier's formulation that the German nation remained intact despite the political division, I sounded the alarm bells in the *Daily Telegraph*, and the *Wall Street Journal*, among others, has done the same.

Chancellor Kohl's own visit to Moscow in October 1988 was partly intended to reassure his allies, including Mrs Thatcher, who is said to have lectured "dear Helmut" on the telephone on the eve of his departure. The trip did much to allay Western fears, above all because the Soviet leader showed no inclination to dangle reunification before his guest. Kohl played his part, too. He told the *Financial Times* recently: "I stick to my position over the unity of the nation. But the Federal Republic is part of the Western world. I said this to Gorbachov: there is no price at which we could be, so to speak, bought out."

Plain speaking. Quite apart from the fact that Kohl himself is mortal, however, Baring's warning takes account of the persistence of such unwavering loyalty to the West among many of his compatriots. "Perhaps one must be still more pessimistic", he writes. "One must reckon with the possibility that the supporters of the new *Ostpolitik* and those of the old *Westpolitik* will agree upon a common position of hovering between East and West."

Is the Bonn Establishment alert to this possibility? It is no longer a possibility, but a fact. The Centre-Right coalition is based, to an increasing degree, on just such an understanding. It does not exactly follow party lines, but exists between conservatives who see themselves in the Adenauer tradition, emphasising Western Europe and the United States, yet believe that West Germany's political influence is still not commensurate with her economic power, and progressive pragmatists who harbour grander ambitions: Bonn as the advocate of the oppressed; as peacemaker in the Middle East; as honest broker between Moscow and Washington; as heir apparent in *Mitteleuropa*.

Often it is Chancellor Kohl who must give way to the enthusiasts of *Ostpolitik*, symbolised in his Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. But "Genscherism", a misleading Washington "buzz-word", might as well be called after Helmut Schmidt, Willy Brandt, Egon Bahr or many other leading politicians. It permeates the Foreign Ministry and will certainly survive Genscher's term of office. In February this year, the decision was made to put off a decision on the modernisation of short-range nuclear missiles until after the next election, i.e. 1991-92. Bonn thereby gave notice to NATO that its priority is harmony and consensus at home. If the Atlantic Alliance, as a result of this, is deprived even of the appearance of unity, so much the worse for the Alliance.

WHEN HELMUT KOHL gave a press conference early in the New Year, I asked him whether he had read the new book by Arnulf Baring and, if so, what he thought of it. Politicians today read very few books: even politicians who, like Kohl, boast doctorates in history. The Chancellor had never heard of this book, much less read it. He showed no desire to do so after hearing that it was a warning against the temptation to pursue an independent course between East and West at the expense of the Atlantic Alliance, against any overestimation of West German power or the security of its democratic system: in short, against a repetition of some of the errors which have helped to lead Germany to disaster twice this century.

Chancellor Kohl's lack of intellectual curiosity would matter less if one could be confident that those around him were more alert. After the disastrous handling of the Libyan chemical weapons affair by Kohl and his entourage—a wholly unnecessary cause of bad blood between Bonn and Washington which illustrated many of the problems highlighted by Baring's book—one cannot have much faith in the Chancellor's advisers. The last Kohl speechwriter to carry real intellectual weight was the historian Michael Stürmer, who now runs a think-tank, the *Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik* at Ebenhausen in Bavaria (which helped to finance the writing of Baring's book). Kohl parted company from Stürmer several years ago.

IT IS NOT JUST the politicians who have ignored Baring's lone voice. West German intellectuals, too, have mostly responded either patronisingly or by the classic German method of dealing with inconvenient authors: *das Totschweigen*, death by silence. Compared to the *Wall Street Journal*, which printed extracts, the West German press has given Baring's book a cool reception. Even the Chancellor's special envoy to the United States, Professor Werner Weidenfeld, in a generally favourable review for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, managed to convey the impression that Baring had departed from the narrow path of reason and *Realpolitik* in favour of a romantic Atlanticism. "An intellectual declaration of love for America", he mischievously called the book.

Yet Baring's thesis is precisely that the self-styled *Realpolitiker*—the "pragmatists" who counsel Bonn to eschew "Cold War ideology", to negotiate with the Soviet Union as though with any other power, and above all to pursue the special German interests in Eastern Europe regardless of Western reservations—are the heirs to the political romantics of the past. He takes the reader on a critical *tour d'horizon* of recent German history, examines the foundations of the Federal Republic, and then subjects revisionists of Left and Right to a scrutiny which few withstand.

Baring has boundless admiration for Adenauer, the first and, he fears, the last chancellor to possess that invaluable sense of danger: an awareness of the enduring fragility, the need for constant legitimation through NATO and the EEC, of the political system he created in collaboration with the Americans and British, and of the precarious geo-strategic situation of the Federal Republic. But Baring also thinks that West Germany, while owing its astonishing success to Adenauer's deliberate renunciation of all temptations to disturb the Republic's firm anchoring in the West, has an insoluble dilemma built into its design. This internal contradiction began to emerge during the '60s, when General de Gaulle forced the Germans to steer a difficult course between two of its most important allies, but only became fully visible with the momentous decision to embark on *Ostpolitik* in the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

second half of that decade. Baring argues that Bonn's foreign policy, drawn in at least three different and competing directions, has reached a degree of complexity that must prove impossible to sustain, no matter how hyperactive Genscher or his successor continues to be.

His conclusions are shattering:

> "We do not take sufficient trouble to watch the incipient disengagement from Europe which is under way across the Atlantic; we do not consider carefully enough what the consequences for us might be. Instead, we are eager to emphasise the distance between ourselves and the Americans. In our new, dreamy delight in risk-taking, we are well on the way to distancing ourselves in small, almost unnoticeable steps, from the United States. If things carry on like that, it must end badly."

How does Baring arrive at this gloomy prognosis? Much of his analysis is of the American self-doubt which crystallised in Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*[2] and the debate that followed it. He wrote the book partly while living in Washington during 1987, and could observe the emerging wave of conservative scepticism about Western Europe's economic, political and military role, which even now has not begun to ebb. What unnerved him then—and presumably does so even more today—was the fact that this American "alliance-weariness" emerged without any real grasp of what was simultaneously going on in West Germany. "The extent to which Germans are now distancing themselves from the USA, the growing alienation, has remained hidden from the broad mass of the American population", he writes.

It is Baring's examination of this German ferment, which is quite inadequately contained in the notion of anti-Americanism, that makes his book important and original. The chapter entitled *"Deutsche Bewegung"* ("German Movement"), though indebted to Walter Laqueur, is a timely reminder of one fatal continuity in German history. The German *Wandervögel* of the early 20th century, whom D. H. Lawrence observed in Italy with a mixture of admiration and alarm, were only the forerunners of today's German youth movements. True, the student movement of the late '60s, like the alternative life-styles and Green movement of the '70s, or the peace movement of the early '80s, all proved to be transient; but all left behind sediments in the German intelligentsia (East as well as West) which can and must be considered by all the major political parties.

There is nothing unhealthily masochistic about Baring's unfashionably unflattering portrait of his countrymen. When, for example, he reminds us—just 40 years after the event—that it was only the Berlin blockade which convinced the Americans to make their military and political commitment to West German democracy permanent, he is right. The mention of Berlin, however, is also a reminder of one major omission from Baring's catalogue of dangerously visionary movements (or, as he sees them, manifestations of the same movement). The rise of the nationalist Right in the few months since Franz Josef Strauss's death now poses a threat which may

[2] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Unwin Hyman, Random House, 1988)

Arnulf Baring's Geopolitical Fears

BARING, *as a crowning pessimism and misfortune, also sees the German Federal Republic as a pillar, already inwardly cracked. He recognises at present the after-growth of the romantic "German Movement" which, unsatisfied with "being", is turning to "becoming", leaving behind the ground of reality, misunderstanding the position, and overestimating, through fear, its own power. Specifically, Baring is referring to the Greens who, while not perhaps establishing anything politically, are changing political thinking deeply and infectiously. He also points to the Social Democrats and finally comes to the disappointed Conservatives of the Christian-Social Union, whose fear seems to him to be an unintelligent resentment. But, in all this, Baring is not referring to party politics, but to the now rapidly increasing exponents of the old German spirit, of the strands of self-destruction, always directed toward devastation—first in 1918, then in 1945, and now perhaps a third time.*

HIS HISTORICAL **analysis of the Germans is based on written history, but particularly on Sebastian Haffner. A breath of fatalism hangs over those places in the text where Baring describes the German disposition for doom. These are familiar images and, like all predetermined ideas, lead to contradictions. In any case we must ask ourselves what Baring is doing when he portrays the policy of Adenauer and the Americans after the War, the birth of the Federal Republic, as a triumph of ignominious cunning. No one, neither the United States nor Adenauer, whom Schumacher called "by right" Chancellor of the allies, ever contemplated Germany's unity, the return to "clumsy greatness" (Haffner). It was a question of nothing less than Western integration, the addition of the Western part of Germany to the reserve fund of democratic states, and the second defeat of Germany after the War. So that freedom might be saved and peace reign at last.**

WAS THIS really so? The answer is no. The idea that the United States and Adenauer placed the West Germans under the shelter of a policy of division, not so much because of the Soviet threat as because of the threatening mentality of the Germans themselves, recalls the mechanistic "raison d'état" *of 18th-century Absolutism. The argument that this was so is as dangerous as it is false. For it would give those who now wish to change everything a national justification for their policy. Not just some "integration" or other—to which a people never consents—would be endangered. The peril would be to the normal, advantageous connection with the West, which we need as a secure basis for the national policy of the future.*

Herbert Kremp

in WELT DES BUCHES

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prove more difficult to master than the Left-wing tide of the early '80s.

Some conservative West German politicians have been hastily adapting their domestic policies to stop Franz Schönhuber's unappetising Republican Party from outflanking them, following its success in January's West Berlin state election. Others on the Left have demonstrated their illiberalism by demanding that the secret service, the *Verfassungsschutz*—so often decried by them as a modern *Gestapo*—should now be used to hound the new nationalists. Schönhuber and many of his voters, incidentally, were once Social Democrats. Since many of the latter are also members of the security forces, it would place a serious strain on their loyalty to suppress the new party, without concrete evidence of anti-constitutional aims or activities. The truth is that the authorities can do very little, unless something truly damning emerges from the party's past, or that of its leader. At least West Germany does not, like Austria, have the spectacle of a young Right-wing German nationalist, Jörg Haider, taking over its liberal party, the *FPÖ*, with between 10 and 20% of the vote and a virtual veto on all forms of government except minority ones and grand coalitions (which notoriously breed further extremism). Not yet, anyway.

Like the Far Left, the Republicans have their own brand of anti-Americanism and even neutralism. They want the Federal Republic free of Western obligations in order to pursue nationalist designs in Eastern Europe: the borders of 1937 are a "minimum" requirement. Their windy, sub-Gaullist demagogy is already adding perceptibly to the pressures on Chancellor Kohl, though so far he has refused to alter course in what would probably be a counter-productive attempt to woo back defecting voters. This policy may, however, have to weaken if the Republicans continue to do well this year.

Schönhuber's anti-Americanism should not surprise anybody who has watched the intellectual scene in his native Munich. There, a group of conservative Catholic thinkers, centred on the journal *Criticon* and indebted to more or less compromised but again fashionable pre-War oracles like Carl Schmitt and Ernst Jünger, have for years been warning the Germans to resist the cultural and political blandishments of the Western Allies. While by no means neutralists, they reject the "compulsive resort to alibis" which they see as imposed on West Germany by the Allies. Their version of conservatism, like Enoch Powell's in Britain, is liable to place considerations of sovereignty before obligations to the Alliance. Writers like Armin Mohler and Caspar von Schrenk-Notzing, while unconnected to the Republicans and on most issues probably closer to Strauss, may now see their ideas adapted for the beer tent and the *stammtisch* by Schönhuber, just as their mentors found themselves, willingly our unwillingly, pressed into service in the '30s.

Without the death of Franz Josef Strauss last September, a figure like Schönhuber could never have become a national figure. Only now are Strauss's liberal critics, both in West Germany and abroad, beginning to understand his true significance. As a staunch Atlanticist, he was able to channel German nationalist sentiment in pro-Western directions. His robust manner of dealing with the Nazi past never approached the eloquence of Willy Brandt falling on his knees in the Warsaw ghetto, or President Richard von Weizsäcker's sublime speech on the 40th anniversary of VE Day. Strauss was, nevertheless, dignified and free from the *tu quoque* resentment and self-pity revealed in Schönhuber's jibes at the victims and opponents of the Nazis.

Strauss's death has opened a new chapter in the history of what one might reasonably call the "Nazi-neurosis" of the post-War West Germans. Though Baring does not address this problem directly, it is implicit in much of his critique. The belief is very deeply held—and it cuts right across party lines—that West Germany is treated worse by her allies than would be her due without her Nazi past. This moral club-foot, bequeathed by a generation of politicians that has now almost retired from the scene (after Strauss, only President Weizsäcker, Alfred Dregger and—strange bedfellows—Franz Schönhuber remain), is increasingly resented by the tough-minded young men in a hurry. The Jenninger débâcle last November was, for many, the last straw. One watches with disbelief as legends establish themselves with terrifying speed, all intended to bolster the myth that West Germany is victimised, "singularised" in the fashionable cant phrase, despite her exemplary conduct. Whether it be the volume of low-level air-force training over West Germany or the peculiar propensity of short-range nuclear missiles to kill German civilians, whether it be British worries over German loans to the Soviet Union or American objections to fissionable nuclear exports to Pakistan, the private reaction to criticism from abroad is too often: "It's all just because of Hitler!"

When William Safire wrote a column in the *New York Times* in January which compared with Auschwitz, Bonn's readiness to turn a blind eye to German exports of chemical installations to Libya, there were furious reactions from all sides in West Germany. Certainly, the comparison was unjust and exaggerated—but for legitimate polemical purposes. The suggestion by one highly influential young Christian Democrat politician, Volker Rühe, that Bonn should consider closing Goethe Institutes in the US in response to this "media campaign"—others even added the prefix "Jewish"—was only one extreme. In reality, there was no "campaign": merely one idiosyncratic columnist.

The truly paranoid West German conspiracy theory that Washington had, through the press, tried to indict the entire German nation before the bar of world opinion, was generally believed. The Bush Administration allowed Kohl's spokesman Friedhelm Ost to give the impression that the President had, in his first telephone call to the Chancellor after assuming office, expressed "regret" for the American media's conduct. If true, this would surely have been a unique concession to German Nazi-neurosis, and a foolish precedent. In fact, the "apology" seems to have been a gloss placed on Bush's remarks by Bonn. As for the arming of Libya with poison gas, Kohl is unrepentant, and in February still fulminated to the *Financial Times*: "The whole time you say the Germans have a special past. . . . The Germans have nothing to hide. What angered us were the incredible assertions against Genscher and me in American newspapers." As long as Bonn reacts with indifference to well-intentioned internal critics like Bar-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing and with bluster to foreign critics (who are nowdays more likely to be American or British than Soviet), the outlook will remain stormy.

BARING'S critique is not, however, wholly pessimistic. True, he is sceptical about the European Community's ability to offer a viable political or military alternative to the American guarantee—he attacks proposals along those lines by Helmut Schmidt and his Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit*. (Since this solution is occasionally proposed by parlour strategists in Britain, too, this part of Baring's book deserves to be better known.) But Baring is convinced that the Western Europeans, above all the West Germans, should be prepared to take on some of the costs of the US presence in Europe, and even of such international policing activities as the protection of shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf.

This seems to me desirable enough, but wholly unrealistic in the present climate. Since it is Baring's only positive suggestion, his book paints a rather bleak prospect for NATO and for the Federal Republic. That does not invalidate it in any way. The fatalism about American disengagement which he identifies even in the latest thought of so indubitably loyal, farsighted and self-critical a statesman as Schmidt is indeed likely to be self-fulfilling, and must be vigorously resisted.

If one is depressed by the spectre of German political romanticism haunting Europe once again, it is worth remembering that the problems, though perhaps more acute, are not really new. In 1963, the eminent conservative political scientist Rüdiger Altmann, in his book *Adenauer's Legacy*, warned against many of the same tendencies that now disturb Baring:

> "Despite the growing German potential, NATO has lost in importance. It has not become the basis of a common foreign policy by the Allies. Its relationship to European integration is in question. As insurance, it is naturally recognised by all the partners. One has one's policy, pays one's premium and hopes that it will never be needed. But one no longer lives behind the fence: one would rather go for a walk on the other side. That is exactly what the Soviets want."

Hard to believe that this is Altmann in 1963, not Baring in 1988. Yet the quarter-century that lies between the two admonitions was a peaceful one, and at the end of the Cold War—which Altmann, and no doubt others, too, was already proclaiming then—is still good for a headline. The Western Alliance has survived many crises, and if Baring is correct in claiming that it still accords with West German interests, there must be a good chance that the "new megalomania" will, before too long, mature into old patriotism.

Wind Chime

Wind stirs a bonfire of
October maples. I take off
with my daughter, son, his

wife and son, for woods on
Indian River. Years we've
trespassed through this maze

of creatures, sharing wild
grapes, walnuts, mushroom
puffs. Tangling with hail-

fellow mosquitoes. Tracked
through snowdrifts in a storm
up to this stand of poplars,

listening to the wind-chime
icicles. Today, as autumn
shreds and patches up, we hear

the strumming of the leaves,
watch branches weaving light
into the clouds, know each time

we return might be the last.

Lucin Stryk

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Penelope Bennett

The Trials

CYNTHIA GUNN awoke abruptly. She raised her head and listened . . . while within her a disturbing dream sank and became blurred . . . and deep countryside silence filled her bedroom. Her pink and white cheeks were imprinted with striped patterns from the candlewick bedspread which she always forgot to remove, because she liked the companionship of its weight. But the innocent colouring of her complexion (as well as the innocence of her expression) didn't blend with the first hints of greyness in her hair, which was rather coarse and crinkly, more akin to upholstery stuffing bursting from a chair than hair growing from a head—at least that was its usual appearance, until yesterday, when she had had it permed, especially for tomorrow.

"Move over, chaps. Leave some room for mother", she addressed the dog and two cats who shared her bed. Violet, an elderly Pekinese who snored, settled herself into the small of Cynthia's large back while Digby, a Siamese cat, lay across her legs, clamping them down. Cynthia, gazing round at all the fur which surrounded her, noticed how the animals appeared to grow in size and weight during the night, almost metamorphosing into different creatures. She lay down, stretched to her full six-feet-two-inches (when her cream-coloured feet stuck out of the end of the bed) and endeavoured to rebury herself in the safety of sleep. But the sunken dream rose again: in it she was being chased by a dog; she was being hypnotised by it. She pressed her face into the pillow, squashing the dream. Obviously, she counselled herself, she was just nervous about tomorrow, even though it was her favourite day of the year.

At that moment, she felt the vibration of sheep's hooves running across the field outside her bungalow. The stampeding feet were followed by a low growl. She sat up, looking, with her tightly permed hair and buff viyella nightgown, not unlike a startled sheep herself.

"What stupid creatures sheep are. It's only Girly in her kennel." Girly was the collie she had saved up for and finally bought, fully-trained, for sheep-dog trialling. Tomorrow they were going to compete in the County Championship which last year, to her amazement, she had won. The triumph of her success had lasted all through the year.

Next door, Jones, her parrot, whistled a few bars of *Strangers in the Night*. She tapped on the wall.

"It's still the middle of the night, laddie", she informed him kindly. Jones became silent.

At six a.m. the sharp morning light squeezed itself between her closed eye-lids. Digby and Humphrey, who watched over her like male nurses, tip-toed over the hills and valleys of her body, kneading her with their thumb-tip-sized paws. Through the narrow slit in her window came the sound of cat calls—gurgling, minor-keyed noises which were strong, almost scented, and disturbing. As though blindfold, her arm delved under the dusty bed for one of her size nine shoes, which she flung against the wall.

"Shut up, Please!" Neutered Digby and Humphrey (his uncle) sat up and looked at Cynthia, who saw herself reflected twice in the intense blue of Digby's unblinking oriental eyes. She put her hand out to stroke him, but something about his expression made her withdraw.

It was time to get up. Cynthia washed bits of herself in a small hand-basin which was just large enough for her hands and a guest-size piece of soap. She cleaned her teeth; she had a lot of teeth and so had her younger brother Ginger. That so many teeth should have been distributed between only two people seemed over-generous. Now, she didn't see Ginger, or many other people. People were so difficult to get on with . . . except of course for her sheep-dog-trialling friends. Animals were easier, she thought. And plants. Cynthia Gunn worked in a market-garden.

SHE WENT to her wardrobe, part of which was occupied by cricket bats left over from her Leeds University days when she'd attempted to get a degree in chemistry. Several bats clattered to the floor, startling Cynthia who always took time to wake up properly. Sleep (the only place where she felt completely safe) acted upon her like a drug, pulling her down into its depths from which, in the morning, she had to clamber painfully out into the even more painful reality of the day. She put on a garment which was made of wool from her own small flock of Jacob sheep. Despite the smallness of the flock, the garment was very long, so it was difficult to tell whether it was a jumper which had slunk downwards or a dress which had shrunk upwards. Like most of the clothes she wore, it smelled very faintly of biscuits—Digestive. She then put on a pair of trousers which she had converted from a party skirt her mother had helped her to make, before she had left home to go to university.

"You probably won't need it for parties, dear", Mrs

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gunn had said, finding it difficult to imagine her daughter being invited to parties. "Of course I will", Cynthia had replied. But she had quickly apologised, while her mother, crouching far below her, had struggled with the two-and-three-quarter yards of sale material, printed with large leaves from different deciduous trees. Mrs Gunn, who had felt her colossal daughter towering above her (more like a building than a daughter), could have hit her, her height made her so angry. Nothing fitted! And she had tugged at an elm leaf. "What a lump you are", she had said, from the side of her mouth which wasn't occupied by pins. But the sentence had still been audible. Cynthia, perhaps accustomed to Mrs Gunn's bark being worse, apparently, than her bite, had looked down into her mother's steel-grey hair and thought how strong she was.

Cynthia combed her hair; at least she tried to, but the comb couldn't cope with the dense undergrowth of tightly permed curls which looked and felt as though they'd been screwed into her head, giving her a flushed, ferocious expression. She glanced shyly in the mirror: the overgrown grey-haired schoolgirl who looked back didn't appear to own or be comfortable inside her body.

"You look rather like a lady farmer", she chortled to herself; but it was almost as if she regretted laughing, the way her laughter creaked out.

"Come on, boys. And you, Violet dear. It's breakfast time and Girly and I must soon be off." Violet, who was overweight, prepared herself for the drop from the bed to the floor, the fear of the eighteen-inch precipice almost overwhelming her desire for food. Cynthia removed an assortment of fur from the sheets, oblivious to what the Cheltenham branch of the Sunlight laundry might think when her mixed-fur sheets arrived to be washed.

From the front room came the sound of barking. Cynthia looked round, a mixture of fear and anger in her eyes: surely Girly hadn't escaped from her kennel? She went into the front room whose only occupant was Jones. Jones was an experienced mimic. Feeling both relieved and ridiculous, she raised the cover from his cage.

"'ello, 'ello!" Jones said in a provocative old man's voice (inherited from his previous owner), while eyeing Cynthia with his grey, knowing eyes.

"'ello, my darlin'", she mimicked affectionately, her wide knees cracking like firewood as she bent to look at him.

She then prepared the boys' breakfast. They always had raw meat for a treat on Saturdays. While she cut it up they moved to and fro between her legs, weaving an invisible web in which her two solid feet were implanted.

"Oh you are a couple!" she said. The cats bit voluptuously into the bright red meat, their eyes closed, their tails flat on the ground. Violet, who suffered from chestiness, watched, breathing heavily, her *retroussé* nose damp and her Bette Davis eyes watery and emotional. Then, miraculously defying gravity, she jumped on to Cynthia's lap and ate her Good Boy Choc Drops. Cynthia kissed Violet's moustached face, smelling her milk-chocolate breath. In response, Violet hiccuped.

"Pardon!" Cynthia Gunn liked good manners. Violet gazed back, her expression replete and forlorn.

Cynthia peeled Jones's grapes and ate the skins; they were good roughage, she'd informed him, but the fruitarian gourmet ignored the information and just perched upside down.

From the garden, small whimpering noises came from Girly's kennel.

"Wait! Your turn will come", Cynthia called out. After Digby and Humphrey had washed each other, they watched Jones, from a distance—fur and feathers separated. She then prepared herself some sandwiches, on her lap, using sardines, which she boned. With one large hand she pressed the bread down and with the other she absent-mindedly swung the sardines' backbones between her fingers. She enjoyed these community meals with the animals. They made *her* feel motherly, and her bungalow feel homely—or how she imagined a home would feel.

"Well, that's that, fellows. Now it's Girly's turn." Cynthia fetched a bowl of dog biscuits. She ate one; she'd always liked them and wondered why people didn't serve them with drinks. "DARLING" was dribbled in blue glaze on the dog bowl, because "Darling" was what she had originally called Girly. Cynthia had always longed to call someone, anyone, "Darling". And no one, especially her parents who were against displays of extravagant emotion, had called her this. The closest she had got was being called "Luv" in Leeds. "Darling" had been rejected by the Sheep Dog Trial Authorities. "What is the dog, anyway?" they had asked her on the telephone, "A dog or a bitch?" "It's a girly dog", she had replied, strenuously avoiding the word bitch. What she had thought might be laughter had filled the earpiece of her telephone, so she had joined in, and called the dog Girly.

CYNTHIA went into the garden. Peering through the gap between the door and the floor of the kennel was Girly's long shining nose, and above it her watchful eyes. One was blue and one was brown, which was why Cynthia had bought her. At times, though, as she looked at each eye individually, this gave her a curiously uncomfortable feeling, especially when Girly was in her kennel, its dark creosoted walls resembling a hood on a bird of prey. As soon as Girly heard Cynthia, she leapt up inside the kennel which sounded as if it would burst apart with her restrained energy and enthusiasm.

"Down girl!" commanded Cynthia, in the tone she had been taught by Girly's original owner. Girly sank obediently to the ground. Cynthia rewarded her submission with dog biscuits, while stroking her smooth warm head judiciously. She felt in charge—as her mother must have felt when instilling discipline into her children, rewarding only when rewards were due. She

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had learnt a lot from her mother, she thought—even though the Gunns had never allowed animals into their house, considering them dirty and risky. Marvellous old mother, thought Cynthia; her thoughts, tenderised by time and the need to love, circumnavigating the rock-like Mrs Gunn.

It was time to leave for the trials. In case some of the lads came back with her after the show (as they had last year) she did a little tidying (as she had not done last year). She blew the surface dust from some of the more prominent objects and adjusted her birth certificate on the mantelpiece. Since its edges had started to disintegrate, she had put it into a frame, the sight of it apparently confirming, to her, that she had in fact been born.

She closed the door of Jones's cage, through the bars of which he looked at her, making her feel she was being observed by a solicitor. She popped Violet into a sleeveless reversible cardigan which had a pocket. For what? Then she picked up Humphrey and stroked him, wiping the purr from his body as she stroked—until she saw Digby watching. Eight eyes from four corners of the room observed her, the animals' presence suddenly making the room feel smaller and fuller, and Cynthia feel uneasy.

"Cheerio, chaps, see you later", she called out brightly, as half-guiltily she locked the front door. I wish, she said to herself, I could leave a note for the animals to say I've gone to the trials but *will* be back later.

She opened the door of her van, which had a metal grid to separate her from the animal passenger, similar to that in a police van.

"Car!" she commanded and Girly, her tail between her legs, leapt like a guilty prisoner from her kennel to the car.

The drive to the trial field reminded Cynthia of her time at university, "being broadened out at a considerable cost to the nation", as the Gunns senior had frequently reminded her. (The guilt of her failure to pass her second year examinations still made her feel crumpled inside, so she tried to avoid remembering it.) Although, during this time, she had longed to be visited or go home, she had seen little of her parents; they said it was for the sake of her independence, and because her visits disorganised things. However, they had arranged for her to go out walking with their friends and contemporaries the Aitchisons, and occasionally Mrs Gunn had sent her a food parcel which she had enjoyed unwrapping, undoing all the knots with her big athletic fingers, while imagining her mother taking part in a knot-contest with her. The parcel generally contained what Cynthia called a "fudge cake", the recipe for which required a large quantity of elderly biscuits and not a lot of skill in the culinary arts.

She eyed Girly through the rear mirror and smiled proudly. Girly yawned, her white teeth gleaming behind the metal bars. They were nearly there. Cynthia felt pangs of stage fright. She might not have been successful in getting a degree, but surely her parents would have been proud about her winning the trial cup. So, no doubt, would the Aitchisons. They were between sixty and seventy years old—even then—and on every third Sunday of the month they had collected her in their car. She had always had to rush to finish her breakfast before they arrived. They always walked in a circle over the moors (Mr Aitchison had a compass), during which time Cynthia had battled with her indigestion. But it had never been chronic, and she had felt privileged, even though Mrs Aitchison, on the rare occasions when she spoke, called her husband Mr Aitchison in front of her. But Cynthia had counteracted this by using their Christian names (Maud and Arthur) privately to herself. After the walk they returned to the Aitchisons' home where they all had a bath, Cynthia last. But she hadn't minded about the tepid water—because it was in their home. After the baths, they ate a light salad supper on their laps and watched the television instead of talking.

CYNTHIA turned off the road and bounced across the trial field. She let out Girly who rushed round and round—a gale on a lead. The triallers and dogs greeted each other, laughing and barking. She peered round for her friend Percy. It was Percy who had told her, when she had asked how long it took to train a dog, "A 'ear to train each leg and if it's a bad dog another 'ear for the tail." He hadn't explained that some people can never train a dog: to her shame Cynthia was one of them. In the same way that she didn't know why she couldn't get on with people, she also knew that she was not too good with animals. Part of her feared them, which was why (despite trying) she had had to buy a trained dog, thinking that the purchase was her best route into local life. Now, though, she had almost forgotten the particularities of the purchase, and hoped that the other triallers had, too. They had not.

"'ello, my old gel", said Percy and they felled blows on each other's backs, despite the difference in height.

"How's Perce?" She tried, not very successfully, to imitate the local dialect. Percy was a dapper man who wore a speckled hat, yellow leather shoes and a thick, faded gold wedding-ring which had embedded itself in his finger.

"'ows the winner, then?" Claud, another trialler, asked Cynthia who, never quite certain if people were joking or not, always heralded the mere signal of a joke with hoots of merriment—for safety's sake.

As everyone waited expectantly for the arrival of the judge, the tea-urn became as dry as the triallers' throats, and was refilled over and over again. Inside a canvas-covered trailer, five amber-eyed sheep huddled, shivering in the summer sun, in their 100% virgin wool coats. Through the canvas cover they heard the sound of dogs' barks tearing at the warm silky air. The sheep were pulled reluctantly from the van and led to a pen, where they waited like school-girl hostages.

Finally, the judge arrived. He wore a flat green hat

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(as green as the field) which made him appear to be sandwiched between hat and field. The trials began. Percy was the first competitor.

"Thurr goes ol' tin whistle", Claud said playfully, a hot-dog sausage disappearing into the tunnel of his mouth.

Eventually it was Cynthia Gunn's turn. She released Girly from her lead and, summoning her courage, strode, slightly stooping, to the post where she stuck her shepherd's crook into the ground. It stood, silhouetted in the shape of a giant question mark. She whistled. Girly (and surprisingly no other dog) joined her at the post. The sheep were released from their pen. She whistled again and Girly rushed off, low over the ground, like a fox, her fur brushing the short grass as she ran towards the sheep. Keeping a wide cunning distance between herself and the flock, she herded them hypnotically—a cat stalking mice. The sheep trotted forwards sedately and then stopped. Girly stopped, her cocked ears cupping every sound. She crouched, her head parallel with the ground, her mouth open, her pink, lolling tongue dripping saliva, while her mesmeric eyes drove the sheep closer and closer together until they became one ten-legged animal, pinned together by fear. Across the wide field Girly and Cynthia communicated with each other in the language she had inherited, and thought she had mastered. At the slightest whistle, the dog stopped or started, the power contained within her body released or restrained by an invisible cord. Cynthia knew that it was only her commands which held in check the instinct in the hungry, murderous dog. It was the epitome of discipline, an extension of the code which her parents had taught her and from which she hoped she would never deviate.

She was doing well. She felt the spectators' admiration behind her, warm and supporting—like a vast family. Inside closed cars, envious dogs of other breeds sat upright in the drivers' seats, resembling chauffeurs. The sheep were now approaching the pen. Cynthia felt in her element, and moved slowly towards the pen gate, ready to close it. But then, suddenly, the sheep scattered and Girly was racing towards the other side of the field, the springy turf beneath her paws.

"Girl!" Cynthia's voice boomed across the field. What was going to be applause turned into muttering.

"If a dog don't feel loike it on the day there's nothin' you can do about it", Percy told a spectator. Perspiration trickled down Cynthia Gunn's wide white forehead while she supported herself on her shepherd's crook. She called and whistled, the long and short whistles like some strange bird; the tenor-voiced sheep baaed tremulously. Supposing, she thought in a hot flush of fear, that Girly's gone off and attacked a sheep in another field?

Behind the spectators' rope Claud explained to two visitors about the fine dividing line between a dog attacking or guiding sheep.

"It's loike this. If a dog suddenly becomes a killer, no matter 'ow good 'e is, 'e 'as to be put down, as once 'e 'as a taste furr sheep, furr blood, there's no way of changin' 'im. And they become so cunnin', too. They'll saunter off, lookin' innocent enough—loike you or me goin' to the pub—go to another farmer's field, catch a sheep and then wash thoroughly before comin' 'ome."

A few minutes later, over the brow of the hill Girly's dark body crept, dark as a storm cloud. Slowly she walked towards her mistress.

The trialling came to an end. The cup was presented to Percy's nephew.

"Never moind", consoled Claud, "you'll save on the silver polish!" Cynthia tried to smile.

"See you at home then, lads, as usual, for some grub", she asked rather than stated, in her least successful attempt at the local dialect. And off she drove, Girly hot and damp in the back. Cynthia Gunn did not look at her in the driving mirror.

When she arrived home she returned Girly to her kennel. Then she opened the front door and nearly fell over the bundle of animals who rushed to greet her, tails wagging and waving.

CYNTHIA prepared a meal for the lads; she liked to give them something manly. This consisted of a khaki-coloured stew from which chicken thighs, and what appeared to be ankles and knees, protruded. (Claud had once told Percy that "our Cynth" was the only cook he knew who bought breastless chickens with three legs.) She worked quickly, chopping and cutting—and cutting out the possibility, which lurked in her mind, that they might not come, because she had failed. The stew was to be followed by a very bright, very stiff jelly which, when entered by the eater's spoon, was apt to catapult forwards, making sucking noises. Certain that she would be the winner of the cup, she had remembered (as she had not done last time) to buy the lads some beer which she considerately, but ill-advisedly, opened in readiness for their arrival.

She then hurriedly prepared herself, dabbing on scent from a bottle which her great aunt had left unopened before she had passed over. Then (many years ago), Cynthia hadn't minded about death and had dabbed the scent on freely. Now, it was nervousness which made her so generous with it.

There was a knock at the door. Percy and Claud entered.

"'ello me old lass. Good smell's comin' from the kitchen, then!" said Percy.

"And from our Cynth, too!" Claud added, in his best party manner. Cynthia tried, unsuccessfully, to suppress a rising blush. Claud went over to the birdcage. "'ello, Smith", he said to Jones who opened his ancient lid a millimetre or two, eyeing him through the slit before closing it.

"He's called Jones", Cynthia reminded him.

"You're a stickler furr farmalities, Cynth." And they all laughed, drinking their flat beer while rocking to and fro on their toes.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She brought in the stew. When they had finished it looked, with the plates piled high with bones, as though a dogs' banquet had taken place. For a long time they discussed the trials; Cynthia felt ashamed and small. Not wanting to spoil the evening, she tried to combat these feelings by bringing in the cheerful jelly. But the noises it made didn't assist the party.

"Well, where's the culprit, then?" Claud asked.

"Girly's in her kennel."

"Why not bring 'er in 'ere, for a treat?"

"It's not a treat she needs, and I never bring her inside; she's a working dog."

"Oh go an. Won't 'urt furr once, will it Perce?"

"Dou-tit", Percy said doubtfully. Not wanting to be a spoil-sport, she fetched Girly. Girly, astonished by this reversal in her routine, leapt up and licked everyone frantically, until Cynthia said, "Down!" Girly slunk beneath the table and lay there, rug-like. Above her head they continued to discuss trialling.

"Course your Girly's got a strong eye to stare out the sheep. There's dogs with very strong eyes 'ho get so invalved that the trialler loses touch with them. And there's dogs with weak eyes and butterfly minds, who the cunnin' old ewes can run circles round." Cynthia gradually revived and felt proud, as though she'd been the provider of Girly's strong eye. At the same moment she felt something almost touching her. She looked down and saw Girly's head stretched out flat on her paws: the strong beams from the dog's eyes rose upwards, holding her eyes. Cynthia shifted her chair, trying to concentrate on what the men were saying. But she couldn't. No matter where she looked her gaze was dragged down to Girly's, as though she were being pulled inside the animal eyes. She felt hot; and then, strangely for a warm evening, a coldness started to spread through her. She put her hands into the sleeves of her jumper, warming and holding herself. Girly continued to gaze up, while Digby, Humphrey, Violet and Jones looked on silently. Cynthia stood up, feeling she had to do something, anything to move away from Girly's stare. She wasn't frightened, she told herself; she just wasn't accustomed to having Girly in the house and being confronted by her at such close quarters. She was still in command. But her fear continued to leak from her, while in the back of her mind the memory of last night's dream began to surface again.

"Can I 'elp?" Percy offered.

"I . . . I was going to give the dog some biscuits." She felt huge, awkward and naked in the room, in comparison with the seated men and flattened dog.

"I'll get 'em." Percy held a handful of biscuits under the table. Girly didn't move. "I think she's asleep—probably whacked out." Cynthia moved to another chair. The black and white furred shape in the dim light under the table shifted to face her. Cynthia held her head upright, forcing herself not to look down, while her stomach contracted into a small, hard lump. *Why* can't she look elsewhere, at someone else? she thought in panic and anger. She felt sick, got up and went to the kitchen, closing the door. She leant against it, her long legs feeling wobbly. But I must go back, she thought, or what will they think? What would mother think? Her panic doubled. She tried to breathe deeply. I'll ask them to put Girly back in her kennel—say I'm just feeling a little poorly. Just as she was about to open the door she heard scratching noises on the other side of it. Violet's elderly nails were too brittle to make such sharp, persistent sounds. Cynthia dashed across the kitchen, opened the back door and went out into the night. An unseen owl hooted from the dark branches of a tree. She looked round in alarm. There was nowhere to go. Then she heard the men's voices calling.

"CYNTH? Where are you?" The voices grew louder. "Miss Gunn? You a'right?" They must have opened the front door: Girly would soon be out. Cynthia ran to the sheep-shed and closed the door. Inside, surrounded and blindfolded by the darkness (and with the dog outside), she felt frightened and then angry, hating the fear. She realised that it wasn't a new sensation; her parents had sometimes made her feel like this—and so had most people. Her anger grew until she felt like smashing the shed; but she was immobilised by the blackness. Never, she swore, did she want to feel like this again. She would get rid of Girly, and stop the ridiculous trialling of which she had never been a part. It was hateful, this distortion of a dog's instincts, and abuse of the sheep's fear.

Outside, the men's voices spoke in the dark, punctuated by sniffing sounds from Girly which grew closer.

"Girly!" Cynthia's voice, imitated by Jones, shouted in the house.

"She's in the 'ouse, then!" the men's voices exclaimed in unison.

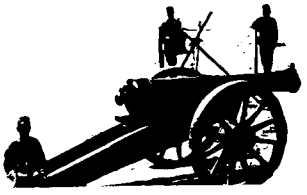
"*No I'm not*, I'm in here, in the sheep-shed. Take Girly away. *Please*. I'm frightened of her—she needs another home—and I don't want to do any more trialling." She opened the door ajar. A few tufts of wool were attached to her permed hair. The men looked at her and she looked back at them. They felt it was the first time they had really seen her: suddenly they could feel her presence. And her frightened, yet determined, voice had more conviction in it now than it had ever had on the field.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michael Charlton

The Great Game Replayed

On the Russians & Afghanistan



THE ARCHITECT of the Soviet Union's greatest political and military defeat was the late President Zia of Pakistan, whose assassination on 17 August 1988 must be seen, says Zbigniew Brzezinski, as "an event of great geostrategic importance". Writing this epitaph in *The Times* soon after Zia's death, Brzezinski—who was National Security Adviser to President Carter at the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—went on to recall the alarm that had been aroused at that time by "the uncertain scope of Moscow's final objective in its sudden southern plunge. . . ."[1] The Russian invasion was indeed unpredicted, and inevitably therefore sudden. But *unpredictable*?

It is now a century and more since the shadow of the Russian eagle first began to darken along the line of the Indian frontier. That "sudden plunge" by the Soviet Union on Afghanistan in 1979 was another step in a journey—the long, slow, but continuous historical thrust by the Russians in Central Asia. The British are joint-custodians of the larger part of this history, and in consequence of an important institutional memory. In the last century, the enormous development of Russia towards the East jolted Britain into revising a judgment about the natural and moral laws of the Russian Empire. While it had been thought that "her slope was to the East", and it was noted that her rivers slackened as they rolled lazily through the endless steppes to stagnate in the marshes around the Caspian Sea, so, it was believed, did her means and her forces.

Once the curtain had gone up on the aggressive Russian drama in Central Asia, however, the whole position was recast. The history of that period discloses the particular circumstances encountered by the Russians, which meant that each advance made necessary another advance, as conquests followed one upon the other. Before the 1840s there was no Russian presence south of the Caspian or the Aral Sea. In the course of the next 60 years, Imperial Russia had conquered and colonised all the great Khanates, including the Little, Middle, and Great Hordes of the Mohammedan world;[2] she had taken Tashkent, Bokhara, Samarkand, Khiva (at the second attempt), and finally Merv, before arriving on the northern frontier of Afghanistan by the turn of the century. "It is instructive to note", Lord Roberts wrote at the time, "how remarkably similar were the circumstances which brought about the first and second Afghan wars, that is, the presence of Russian officers in Kabul."[3]

IN THE LAST HALF of the last century, therefore, the phantom that loomed behind was Russia, then just beginning to rally after the exhaustion of the Crimean War in the years 1854-56, and showing perhaps her first tendency to retaliate by the increased activity of her movements and the strengthening of her position in Central Asia.

The record of this advance is not one of uninterrupted success. It includes military defeat—indeed disaster, as with General Perofski's expedition to Khiva in 1839—but once defeat or reverse was digested, and then retrieved, always the advance was resumed. It is a history which includes specific episodes concerning the conduct of the Russian Generals, like Romanofski and Kauffmann,[4] who appeared to carry forward with impunity the imperial design in Central Asia in opposition to the wishes of Czar Nicholas I, and in defiance of assurances about Russian intentions and ambitions which were given by Russian Ministers to the Legations and Embassies of Europe.

MICHAEL CHARLTON, *one of Britain's leading broadcasters, is a veteran foreign correspondent for the BBC. His articles in* ENCOUNTER *include "The Eagle and the Small Birds" (June, July-August, September-October 1983), a greatly expanded version of a BBC Radio 4 series covering the period from Yalta to "Solidarity" (BBC Publications, 1984); "Star Wars" (February, March, April 1986); and "Ideas & Anarchy in the Middle East" (July-August 1987), a conversation with Elie Kedourie, originally broadcast by BBC Radio 3. His lastest book—"The Little Platoon: British Diplomacy and the Falkland Islands, 1770-1982"—is published this spring by Blackwell.*

[1] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The West's Debt of Honour", *The Times* (London), 26 August 1988.

[2] According to their oral history, the Kazakhs—a Turko-Mongol nomadic people, traced their descent from three brothers. The tribes of the Great, Middle, and Little Hordes occupied the eastern, central, and western parts of what is now modern Kazakhstan.

[3] Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar, *Forty-One Years in India* (Macmillan, 1898). The Afghan Wars took place from 1838-42 and 1878-80.

[4] Constantine von Kauffmann, Governor-General of Turkestan from 1867; he died in Tashkent in 1882.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The strides taken by Russia in Central Asia were judged, in the end, by Britain as arbitrary acts of power; they were to lead, after the "Amballa Conference" of March 1869,[5] to England's abandonment of her former policy of "Masterly Inaction" and its substitution by "the Forward Policy". Henceforth, India was to be defended "above the passes" of the North-West Frontier. Herat—the gateway and key to India—was to be secured at all costs. The outposts of the Indian Empire, at Herat and at Kandahar, were to be manned to prevent their falling into Russian hands; and if Russia overstepped certain limits in her approach to India she should be checked by armed resistance, even at the risk of producing war between the two countries. This "Forward Policy" was taken up by Britain after a long and, one must say, after reading the various memoranda and parliamentary papers, scholarly debate. The ideas and analysis which underlay it gradually gained force.

It is the British Forward Policy which, in all its essentials, was being developed by President Zia with the support of his Western and Arab allies.

THE MAJOR INFLUENCE on thoughtful opinion in England, leading to the adoption of the Forward Policy, was a formidable "pro-Consul". This was Major-General Sir Henry Rawlinson, KCB, Fellow of the Royal Society—the Assyriologist whose decipherment of the Persian cuneiform script of Darius I at Behistun, and its importance to ancient history and philology, according to the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "is only paralleled by Young and Champollion's discovery of the Rosetta stone".

Rawlinson (1810-1895) had been in the military service of the East India Company, and acted as political agent at Kandahar and Baghdad; he became British Envoy and later Minister at the court of Persia. Employed from 1833 to 1839 in reorganising the Persian Army, he was famous for a ride of 750 miles in 150 consecutive hours, which he made in order to warn the British Minister at Teheran of the presence of the Russian agent Vikovitch at Herat, in Afghanistan. Rawlinson was a member of the Council of India (1858, 1868-95), and President of the Royal Geographical Society, Director for life of the Royal Asiatic Society, and a Member of Parliament.

[5] At the Amballa Conference the Viceroy of India, Lord Mayo, met the heir to the Afghan throne, Shir Ali Khan, who was given a written declaration that the British government "would view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of his rivals to disturb his position". Lord Mayo and the Government of India were henceforth committed to a policy based on giving arms and material and moral support to the reigning Amir of Kabul, "the object being the establishment of a strong, friendly and independent power in Afghanistan, as a permanent barrier against schemes of aggression on our North-West Frontier".

[6] The Orenburg colonies were founded in 1743 as the frontier fortress of European Russia, 700 miles east south-east of Moscow. The Jaxartes River is today called Syr Daria. Rawlinson's text is taken from his "Memorandum on the Central Asia Question" to the Secretary of State for India, July 1868.

[7] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "The Russians in Central Asia", *Quarterly Review*, October 1865.

By Camel to Khiva

THE COUNSELS which carried such weight in England derived not only from Rawlinson's scholarship—he was one of the old school of Anglo-Indian officials: soldier, scholar, man of the world—but from the accuracy with which he forecast the development of Russian policy and power in Central Asia, and the manner in which it occurred. In response to the Russian advance, Rawlinson wrote a series of papers (the earliest published in 1865 and 1866) in the *Quarterly Review* in order to draw public attention to the Russian encroachments. These articles, taken from the most authentic sources, he considered to be a fair statement of Russia's progress in the East from the time of her first crossing of the Kirghiz Steppe to her establishment in Tashkent, which has ever since been the headquarters of her power in Central Asia. In a Memorandum of July 1868, submitted to the Secretary of State for India, he identified an underlying, inexorable process at work in Russia's Asian policy, whether it was impelled by "necessity" or "ambition" or both.

This is how Rawlinson viewed the first crossing by Imperial Russia of the Kirghiz Steppe:

> "As long as the Kirghiz steppe, a zone of almost uninhabited desert stretching two thousand miles from west to east, and nearly one thousand miles north to south, intervened as a buffer, between the military colonies of the Orenburg and Siberian lines, and the swarming centres of Mohammedan population beyond the Aral, so long peace was possible in Central Asia. Once the debatable ground was passed, and Russian garrisons jostled against Uzbeg posts on the Jaxartes, there was no longer a possibility of quietude or amicable relations. No sooner was one portion of Uzbeg territory annexed than the Russian outposts came in collision with the tribes beyond. One extension begot another with the unerring certainty of a law of nature."[6]

Rawlinson's analysis paid particular attention to the fate of Khiva—the Khanate just beyond the Caspian, and the occasion of the Russian military disaster of 1840. The famous expedition of General Perofski against Khiva occurred closely after the British occupation of Afghanistan. According to Rawlinson, it had been long contemplated:

> "The vision of a great Tartar empire which would unite Siberia with the fertile valleys of the Oxus and the Jaxartes, had been imagined by the Russian Czars as early as the 16th century and would probably have been realized by Peter the Great or Catherine, but for the intervening wilderness."[7]

Perofski was the Russian Governor-General of Orenburg; his force comprised 5,000 men (3,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry, with 22 field guns and 4 rocket stands) together with 10,000 camels for the carriage of its ordinance and commissariat, with six months rations for each man. It left Orenburg in 1839

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to reduce Khiva, with its fixed population of about half a million, and a million tribal nomads—a journey of some 1,000 miles.

After advancing into the middle of the desert, Perofski's army became completely crippled and was obliged to retrace its steps to Orenburg, with the loss of very considerable portions of its men and material. Rawlinson comments:

> "The exceptional severity of the season is usually advanced as cause for an unexpected failure. In real truth the expedition seems to have been too well appointed, and to have broken down in consequence. To have attempted, indeed, to carry with so small a force an unwieldy mass of 10,000 camels across the desolate tract of the Ust-Urt in midwinter when the ground was covered with snow and there was no atom of herbage to be seen for many hundreds of miles argues the most extraordinary confidence in the power of discipline to overcome the difficulties."

RUSSIA APPEARS to have been so disheartened by the Khiva failure that she at first exaggerated the difficulty of extending her frontier in this direction. At any rate, the official Russian narrative of Perofski's expedition ended with remarkable words:

> "The cause of the jealousy and mistrust with which the conduct of Russia was received in Europe, proceeded from complete ignorance of the countries conterminous with Russia on the South East. A better acquaintance with the regions of Central Asia must long since have shown the world the impracticability of all ideas of conquest in this quarter, even if they existed."[8]

To this Rawlinson added a crisp comment, written during the later phases of the Russian advance in Asia, in 1873, when Khiva was finally absorbed: "Subsequent events have shown the world how entirely the Russian government mistook or misstated the real bearing of the question."[9]

Rawlinson considered that the early Russian attempt to reduce Khiva should be taken as the model for much of what followed. While General Perofski's failure had offered "the spectacle of an Army of veteran soldiers annihilated by the mere passive resistance of a distant enemy", as far as the British were concerned, "We do not consider the problem of the Russian subjugation of Khiva by a direct movement to be at all solved by Perofski's failure."[10] Thus—long before the successful conquest of Khiva by a very much larger force, over 30 years later, in 1873, was to prove his forecast correct—this first failed expedition, Rawlinson believed, must inevitably be seen as a case of *reculer pour mieux sauter*. He conceded that:

> "As a measure of mere frontier police and irrespective of all considerations of external policy [Perofski's expedition] was urgently needed. The Uzbegs of Khiva had committed every conceivable atrocity against Russian government . . . the constantly recurring plunder of caravans and man-stealing and raids."

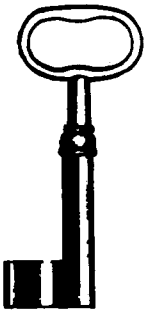
Indeed:

> "The provocation offered by Khiva was not less complete, as a *casus belli*, than the invasion of India by the Sikhs which led to the battles of Ferozshah and Sobraon and terminated in our own annexation of the Punjab."

But blending with what Rawlinson considered to be these legitimate grounds for hostility, and of superior weight, were the controlling reasons for the Russian advance. In the official Russian report of the expedition:

> "The sore point was laid bare with no diplomatic gloss. The object there stated was to 'establish, not the dominion but the strong influence of Russia in the neighbouring Khanates for the reciprocal advantages of trade and to prevent the influence of the East India Company so dangerous to Russia from taking root in Central Asia. It was therefore of the greatest importance to hasten the expedition for the punishment of Khiva so as to prevent the English from supporting the resistance of this Khanate against Russia and to anticipate the possibility of other central Asiatic rulers being induced to join Khiva by means of threats or promises of reward that might be employed by English agents'."[11]

The Limits of Empire?



THE GREAT GAME was afoot. Baron Brunnow[12] was reported to have remarked that "The Sepoy and the Cossack were destined to meet on the banks of the Oxus"—"A prospect", in Rawlinson's words, "viewed by sober diplomatists with dismay".

Between 1853 and 1863, notwithstanding the interruption of the Crimean War, Russia gradually worked her way from the Aral Sea through the salt marshes of the Jaxartes to the alluvial valleys beyond the desert. Ak Masjed, the White Mosque—the principal fort on the Jaxartes of the Uzbegs of Kokand—was stormed in 1853 (there were hundreds of bodies left in the ditch around it); it was renamed Fort Perofski after the Governor-General of Orenburg.

It was not just in the country of the Little Horde that Russian power had been making its way since Perofski's expedition of 1839 against Khiva. The Kirghiz of the Middle Horde had been brought under control in the northern division of the Steppe and there had been a similar success with the Great Horde around Lake Balkash. As Rawlinson explained in "The Russians in Central Asia", in 1854 at Fort Vernoe, on the site of the old Mongolian city of Almaty, the Russians had founded:

---

[8] "A Narrative of the Russian Military Expedition to Khiva under General Perofski in 1839", translated from the Russian by John Michell, 1865, and printed by the Government of India at Calcutta in 1867.

[9] Sir Henry Rawlinson, *England and Russia in the East: A Series of Papers on the Political and Geographical Condition of Central Asia* (John Murray, 1875). This collection includes the writings by Rawlinson cited in this article.

[10] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "Progress of Russia in the East", *Calcutta Review*, vol. xii (1849).

[11] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "The Russians in Central Asia".

[12] Philipp Count von Brunnow, Russian diplomatist, accredited permanent Ambassador to London 1839-54, and 1858-74.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

". . . one of those military agricultural colonies which Russia provides for veteran soldiers and which, wherever they can be planted, under favourable conditions of soil and climate give so much solidity to the frontier. Between 4 and 5 thousand colonists were here congregated at the outset and their numbers since have much increased. Her officers, combining the zeal of explorers with the national passion for fresh acquisition, surveyed and mapped, and took possession, until the frontier of the empire attained in one direction the crest of the Tianshan or 'Celestial mountains' overlooking Chinese Turkestan."

A pattern was being more firmly established. Each advance deemed necessary another advance. Proceeding into the richer and more populous districts, Russia took in rapid succession the great centres of Turkestan: Chemkend, Tashkent, and Khojend. Rawlinson seems prepared to agree that this was "Not perhaps in accordance with any definite plan of aggrandizement, but rather, as she herself asserted, from the actual necessity of the case." It was at this stage that an attempt was made to arrest the tide of conquest.

In November 1864, Prince Gortchakoff, Chancellor of the Russian Empire,[13] addressed a manifesto to the embassies of

[13] Prince Alexander Gortchakoff (d. 1883) was appointed Chancellor in 1863. Until Bismarck's ascendancy, he was the most powerful Minister in Europe.

Map taken from Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, FORTY-ONE YEARS IN INDIA *(1898)*

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

foreign powers which professed to place in its true light the Asiatic policy of Russia.[14] To quote Rawlinson's "Memorandum on the Central Asia Question":

> "Prince Gortchakoff . . . proclaims that these late territorial acquisitions had been brought about by 'Imperious necessity', *and against the wish of the Government*, and asserts with categorical precision that the expansion of the Empire had now reached its limit. In this manifesto which Russia has lately presented to the various courts of Europe in explanation of her Central Asian policy, she has traced with some ingenuity the successive steps by which a civilized government, in contact with nomadic tribes, may be compelled to advance in the mere interests of order and without any aggressive tendency whatever."

Rawlinson in his "Russians in Central Asia" article is at once at his most tolerant, but relentless in the logic of his thesis:

> "[Russia] undertakes to show that the territory inhabited by a migratory population is an impossible frontier for a fixed Government; that *there is no resource indeed but to push on*, until a point is reached where the limitary nations are sufficiently advanced in social organization to admit of definite relations being established with them."

This argument seemed to be made for the occasion rather than having general application, thought Rawlinson:

> "It was strained to an extreme point to furnish the required ground of justification. It is quite conceivable that the occupation of the valley of the Jaxartes may have been judged by the Emperor [Czar Nicholas I] to be indispensable to the due development of Russian power in Central Asia, and indeed it is well known that this has been the traditional creed of the empire since the days of Ivan Vasilevitch . . . but it is impossible to admit that the southern skirt of the Great Steppe is in reality a more defensible barrier against aggression than the northern skirt; and it is really pushing the prerogative of civilization to an absurd extent to pretend that it was necessary for the legitimate exercise of Trade or in the general interests of Humanity to assume the government of two and a half million independent Kirghiz."

Rawlinson dismissed *en passant* the claim in the Russian manifesto that "The recent British annexations in India, which are alluded to as parallel cases, repose avowedly on very different grounds . . . the Punjab having been forfeited in retribution for the invasion of our territory by the Sikhs. . . ." He then turned to an aspect of Prince Gortchakoff's intentionally reassuring manifesto which aroused the closest British interest and attention: the conduct of the Russian Generals. Of the relevant passages in Gortchakoff's letter, he says:

> "Although somewhat grandiloquently expressed it explained how the recent territorial acquisitions had been brought about 'by Imperious necessity' and in opposition to the wish of the Emperor. It further asserted with categorical precision that the expansion of the Empire in Central Asia had now reached its limit. *The only unsatisfactory part of the explanation was the doubt which it seemed to imply, whether in spite of the best intentions on the part of the Russian government, the peace of the East was not liable to be compromised at any moment by the indiscreet or over-zealous conduct of a military commander.*"

THE INK WAS hardly dry on Prince Gortchakoff's letter when hostilities were resumed on the Jaxartes with greater bitterness than ever. As Rawlinson saw it, ". . . there was abundant opportunity in the sequel for testing the value of Prince Gortchakoff's circular; indeed, the prosecution of the Kokand campaign[15] during the present year [1865] has already furnished an instructive commentary, *having completely stultified the Russian assurance of a finality of conquest.*"

According to the Russians it was the Uzbegs of Kokand who were the aggressors: ". . . exasperated by the loss of Turkestan and Chemkend it is possible they were determined to keep the Russian lines in a constant state of alarm". But as "there is no conceivable reason why Prince G should have advisedly put forth a mendacious manifesto to be contradicted immediately by the inexorable logic of facts, we can only believe him to have been guilty of an entire want of political foresight in supposing that he could thus control the course of events and impose an arbitrary limit to the extension of Russian power by a mere expression of will of the Emperor."

Still addressing readers of the *Quarterly Review*, which he considered was "the most convenient method of informing the public on a difficult subject", Rawlinson added this about Prince Gortchakoff's attempt to diminish the alarm in Britain and Europe:

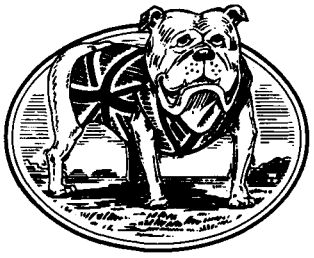
> "We have no intention of impugning the good faith of the Russian government in the recent proceedings. It may be that Prince Gortchakoff's manifesto of last November did really express the Emperor's views as to the danger and inexpediency of any further extension at present of the Russian frontier in Central Asia but *experience has proved that Russia cannot stop in the career on which she has now embarked.*"
>
> If she merely desires a continuous military line for her southern frontier she must abandon Turkestan and Chemkend, as well as the more advanced position of Tashkent, and fall back on the forts beyond the mountains. If on the other hand she determines to sever Tashkent from Kokand, either holding it as her own frontier city, or maintaining it as a free town for the general resort of traders, she will encounter the very same, so-called aggressive provocations which compelled her to advance beyond her former line.
>
> *Indeed, the further she advances, the more imperative it will become for her to take complete possession of the country, since the governmental power . . . will be usurped in different districts by the Kirghiz chieftains and universal anarchy will result.*"

[14] Circular letter addressed to "Legations and Embassies of the Russian Emperor in Foreign Countries", November 1864.

[15] Kokand, which had 600 mosques, was ruled by an independent Khan.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Narrow Strip



THE CONCLUSION, therefore, of advocates of the "Forward Policy" like Rawlinson was that in reality, once Russia had crossed the Kirghiz Steppe, there could be no substantial or permanent check to her expansion until she was "arrested by the barrier of British Indian influence, 'neutral zones' or intermediate independent states being mere temporary expedients to lessen the friction of impact". Rawlinson acknowledged the force of Russian views, which he compared with those which had influenced England in the same matters. There was, he believed, "no need to dwell on the career of Russian arms in the early part of the century. The conquest of Georgia, the acquisition of the frontier provinces of Turkey and Persia and the gradual subjugation of the Kirghiz steppe, cited as ample proofs of her insatiate thirst for conquest, were amply paralleled by our own annexations in India during the same period."[16]

Britain having absorbed Sind and the Punjab, and secured the line of the Indus from Peshawar to the sea, "the shadow of her power hung over the more distant points of Kandahar and Kabul". Russia had moved to meet her with a stride of corresponding dimensions. Instead of the two empires being divided by half the continent of Asia as they used to be, there was now only a narrow strip of territory, a few hundred miles across, intervening between their frontiers.

There had been, Rawlinson observed, "A considerable section of the community and the press & leaders of public opinion who thought that the extension of Russia into Central Asia was a consummation devoutly to be wished. To substitute civilization, albeit not of the highest type, for the grovelling superstition, the cruelty and universal misery which now prevail in the Uzbeg and Afghan principalities, appears to this class an object of paramount importance in the general interests of humanity; of such importance as to override any nice question of right or wrong involved in the substitution of one rule for another."

He identified another class of thinkers, not prepared to carry their humanitarian feelings to such a length, who thought that the less notice taken of pending Russian proceedings the better:

> ". . . they were those who remembered the axiom of Sir Robert Peel in the Sind debate in 1844 that 'wherever civilization and barbarism come into contact the latter must inevitably give way'. They go further and argue, first, that there are positive advantages that British rule in India should be conterminous with Russia; we would then have a reasonable and responsible neighbour with whom to conduct political negotiations; secondly, because Central Asia in a settled condition, and under a European government, would naturally be a better customer in regard to export and import trade with India than the barbarians who now encircle our North West frontier with transit duties and prohibitive tariffs, and who are too poor to purchase our manufactures and too indolent to supply our own markets with their produce."

What then did all these reasoners forget?

> "That India itself is conquered, where a certain amount of discontent is always smouldering, which would be fanned into conflagration by the contiguity of a rival European power. They forget that although Russia is, at present, friendly and pacific and occupied with internal reforms & disposed perhaps to relax her commercial code there is no security that such feelings will be of long duration. Let the advocates of Russian neighbourhood consider what would be the effect on the French position in Algeria if England were to occupy Morocco."

HOSTILITIES HAVING BEEN RESUMED on the Jaxartes, early in 1865, they continued to the uniform advantage of Russia. As Rawlinson put it in his July 1868 Memorandum to the Secretary of State for India:

> ". . . various pretexts have been suggested for so flagrant a departure from Prince Gortchakoff's memorandum of November 1864. . . . In first instance the Bokharians, with whose outposts Russians came in contact after the capture of Chemkend, are said to have challenged the invaders, and forced on a battle in conjunction with the Kokandis, in the vicinity of Tashkent, which led to capture of that city. The next step in advance was the direct invasion of Bokhara territory in 1867, General Romanofski's avowed object being to establish a bridge-head beyond the desert country skirting the Jaxartes, which should immediately threaten Samarkand and Bokhara and thus, as it was asserted, protect the frontier. If Romanofski's aim had been to exasperate rather than conciliate, he could not have devised a more effective expedient than this establishment of a fortified post [at Jisakh] almost within hail of Samarkand, bearding the Amir, as it were, in the high place of his power, encouraging the malcontents throughout the province, and holding out a standing menace of invasion."

Rawlinson's analysis continued:

> "That the Uzbeg chief, indeed, under such circumstances should act in good faith, and execute the peace treaty offered for his acceptance, was an unreasonable expectation. He believed himself to be marked out for destruction. . . in default of better means of defence, he resorted to intrigue and duplicity in order to prolong his existence. Russia may have had very good grounds, both strategically and politically, for provoking the recent contest. No military commander indeed could allow a force of forty thousand men to be concentrated within an easy distance of his position without taking measures for opposing it, and General Kauffman, no doubt, when the crisis arrived, acted judiciously in assuming the offensive instead of waiting to be attacked; but to attribute the war, as has been

[16] These quotations, and those following, are taken from notes added by Rawlinson in 1874 for republication of the *Quarterly Review* papers of 1865 in his *England and Russia in the East*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

done in the official Russian papers, to the bad faith of the Amir, is simply to confound cause and effect."

The invasion which Rawlinson had forecast duly came. General Kauffmann marched on, taking Samarkand, and in 1868 advanced upon Bokhara.

A Game That Two Can Play

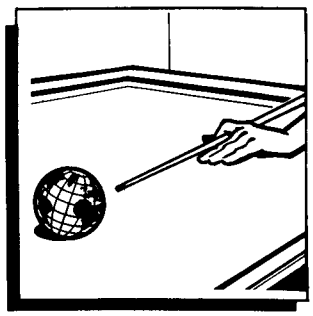
THERE WAS ANOTHER dimension in these exchanges with the Russians in the last century, and in the estimate of both sides it touched the rawest of nerves. In support of his conclusions, Rawlinson drew attention to letters from Monsieur Grigorieff, the late Governor of Western Siberia, who had been "personally & practically connected with the Eastern Question for the last twenty years", and whom he felt "should be regarded indeed almost as an official exposition of the sentiments and policy of St Petersburg". Against a background of what Rawlinson in his "Russians in Central Asia" article had described as "renewed supplications by envoys from Kokand to stop the advancing Russians" and "following the loss of Chemkend, and Turkestan, a third and still more bitter cry of distress borne to the government of India by the Uzbeg ambassador", these letters were published in the *Moscow Gazette* during 1867.

> "England [M. Grigorieff wrote] is the only country that can assist the Bokharians in a war with Russia . . . it is therefore very probable the Amir will apply for cooperation against us to the British govt in India. The time has passed when we regarded diplomatic notes with the same terror as we regarded the approach of the cholera . . . our foreign office is now sufficiently 'fire-proof' in this respect and it is accustomed to hostile remonstrances from European governments, and will be well able to answer any fresh attempt of such a nature with becoming dignity . . . we may remind the English that exciting or fostering revolt is a game that two can play at, and that if underhand assistance should be rendered to the dissatisfied Bokharians, we might retaliate by applying the same disturbing agency to various weak points upon the India frontier. Such a mode of conflict would be possible, but it would be advantageous neither to one party nor the other . . . it would be derogatory to the dignity of two great nations. But, that Bokhara, furnished with moral support and encouragement from the South, may endeavour to stir up a general and combined Mohammedan movement against us is more than probable. Khiva and Kokand may be expected under certain circumstances to unite their forces with her; but this will only lead to the more speedy destruction of the whole three [Uzbeg] provinces. In every contest a portion of the Uzbeg territory will be lost, until their independence is completely gone and they are ultimately swallowed up in the Russian Empire."

Such political questions were, in Rawlinson's opinion, in danger of being neglected; he believed they were of vastly superior importance to any trade interests that could possibly be involved. "Russia has always dreaded the effect on her inflammable Asiatic subjects of the formation of a strong and prosperous Mohammedan power in their immediate neighbourhood", he wrote, "and she has thus looked with intense jealousy on any assistance, moral or material, that might be furnished by England to this end. . . ."

> "It is consistent with neither our dignity nor our interests to admit that we are indebted to Russia for the exemption of Afghanistan from political intrigue, unless she also admits that she is indebted to our forbearance for the continued tranquillity of Bokhara and Kokand. No one will question the truth of the remark of Grigorief, that 'It would be derogatory to the dignity of two great nations like England and Russia to engage in a contest of petty intrigue, or to strive at mutual injury by exciting and fostering revolt among each other's subjects', but it must always be remembered that Russia is far more vulnerable than England in this respect, and that we could instigate a great anti-Russia Mohammedan movement north of the Oxus with much greater facility than she could stir up the Sikhs and Hindus beyond the Oxus. For the sake of civilization however, in the interests of human progress, of peaceful commerce, and of religion it is to be hoped that we may never be forced into such an unnatural path of retaliation."[17]

Generals & Politicians



SIR HENRY RAWLINSON HAD ALSO developed his thoughts concerning the possibly Bonapartist inclinations of the Russian Generals who had been in command of these successive Central Asia campaigns—activities to which Prince Gortchakoff had drawn attention in one of his *Moscow Gazette* letters when he referred to the territorial acquisitions being brought about by "Imperious necessity" and contrary to the wishes of Czar Nicholas I.

> "A point of some importance to the true appreciation of the Central Asia question is the relation which exists between the local commanders and the central government at St Petersburg. Russia has always attributed to her military chiefs a degree of power in influencing the national policy which we in this country find difficult to realize. She used to explain the slow progress that was made in subjugating the Caucasus by pointing to the self-interest of the army which forbade the premature closing of so fertile a source of promotion and honours. The same antagonism of feeling between civil and military authorities is said to have existed in Turkestan from the first outbreak of hostilities. General Tchernaieff, the captor of Tashkent, was recalled from his command, avowedly in consequence of the aggressive character of his policy, and a few years later his

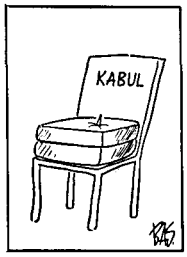
[17] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "Later Phases of the Central Asia Question", written in 1874, published 1875.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

successor, Romanofski, was deprived of all military rank for the similar offence of having invaded Bokhara territory against orders. General Kauffmann too, is likely to be publicly rebuked for his recent brilliant success. But, are these marks of the Emperor's displeasure real? Or are they intended merely to satisfy the clamours of a peace party in Russia, and to anticipate foreign complaint? It is well known that Tchernaieff, notwithstanding his apparent disgrace, received a diamond-hilted sword from the Emperor as the conqueror of Tashkent, and Romanofski is understood to be about to be restored to his full rank and honours. General Kauffmann is also pretty sure to be rewarded for his military achievements at the same time that he is reprimanded for his undue political activity."[18]

[18] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "The Russians in Central Asia".

Between the Sepoy & the Cossack



THE DOURANEE EMPIRE, *which has since been shorn of some of its fairest provinces, [in 1800] consisted of Afghanistan, part of Khorassan, Cashmere, and the Derajat. The Sikh nation had not then acquired the strength which a few years later enabled it, under the military directorship of Runjeet Singh, to curb the pretensions and to mutilate the empire of its dominant neighbour. That empire extended from Herat in the west, to Cashmere in the east; from northern Balkh to southern Shikarpoor. Bounded on the north and east by immense mountain ranges, and on the south and west by vast tracts of sandy desert, it opposed to external hostility natural defences of a formidable character. The general aspect of the country was wild and forbidding; in the imagination of the people haunted with goules and genii; but not unvaried by spots of gentler beauty in the valleys and on the plains. . . .*

Few and far between as were the towns, the kingdom was thinly populated. The people were a race—or a group of races—of hardy, vigorous mountaineers. The physical character of the country had stamped itself on the moral conformation of its inhabitants. Brave, independent, but of a turbulent vindictive character, their very existence seemed to depend upon a constant succession of internal feuds. The wisest among them would probably have shaken their heads in negation of the adage—"Happy the country whose annals are a blank". They knew no happiness in anything but strife. It was their delight to live in a state of chronic warfare. Among such a people civil war has a natural tendency to perpetuate itself. Blood is always crying aloud for blood. Revenge was a virtue among them; the heritage of retribution passed from father to son; and murder became a solemn duty. Living under a dry, clear, bracing climate, but one subject to considerable alterations of heat and cold, the people were strong and active; and as navigable rivers were wanting, and the precipitous nature of the country forbade the use of wheeled carriages, they were for the most part good horsemen, and lived much in the saddle. Early trained to the use of arms, compelled constantly to wear and often to use them in the ordinary intercourse of life, every man was more or less a soldier or a bandit. Their very shepherds were men of strife. The pastoral and the predatory character were strangely blended; and the tented cantonments of the sheep-drivers often bristled into camps of war. . . .

Hospitable and generous, they entertained the stranger without stint, and even his deadliest enemy was safe beneath the Afghan's roof. . . . Judged by the strict standard of a Christian people, they were not truthful in word or honest in deed, but, side by side with other Asiatic nations, their truthfulness and honesty were conspicuous. Kindly and considerate to their immediate dependents, the higher classes were followed with loyal zeal and served with devoted fidelity by the lower. . . . Unlettered were they, but not incurious; and athough their more polished brethren of Persia looked upon them as the Bœotians of Central Asia, their Spartan simplicity and manliness more than compensated for the absence of the Attic wit and eloquence of their western neighbours. . . .

WHEN IT WAS *[stated in 1838] by the Russian minister that his government had more reason to be alarmed by the movements of Great Britain, than Great Britain by the movements of Russia; and that England sought to monopolise the privilege of intrigue in Central Asia, it was difficult for any candid and unprejudiced observer of events to pronounce harshly upon the injustice of the imputation. When, too, some time afterwards, Baron Brunow said to Sir John Hobhouse, "If we go on at this rate, the Cossack and the Sepoy will soon meet on the banks of the Oxus",[1] it would have been hard to have laid the contemplated collision wholly to the account of the restlessness of the Czar. True it is, that the policy of Russia in the East had been distinguished for its aggressive tendencies;[2] and it is equally true, that in the plenitude of our national self-love, we encouraged the conviction that Great Britain had conquered the entire continent of Hindostan by a series of purely defensive measures. Looking merely at the recognised policy of the East India Company, the distinction may be admitted. For a century have this great body been steadfastly setting their face against the extension of their empire; but their empire has been extended in spite of them, and their agents have been less pacific than themselves. The general tendencies of the Eastern policy worked out by the English in India has not been purely defensive, and they are, perhaps, the last people in the world entitled to complain of the encroachments of their allies. England and Russia seemed at one time to be—and, perhaps, they are still—approaching each other on the vast Central-Asian battlefield; but when the account between the two great European states comes to be struck, it is doubtful whether History will set down against the Muscovite power any greater transgression than that which it is the object of these volumes to record.*

Sir John William Kaye
History of the War in Afghanistan *(1851)*

[1] Sir John Hobhouse's answer is worth giving. "Very probably, Baron; but however much I should regret the collision, I should have no fear of the result."

[2] For a very interesting and ably written summary of the progress of Russia in the East, and an elaborate investigation of the question of the possibility of a Russian invasion of India, see Mr Robert Bell's excellent "History of Russia". It was written before the British crossed the Indus—before Russia entangled herself in the steppes, and England in the defiles of Central Asia. Neither country now, remembering these disasters, thinks of the meeting of the Sepoy and the Cossack without a shudder.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Within five years the actions and fortunes of General Kauffmann in particular would demonstrate this to be a prescient forecast. Kauffmann was the leader of the final and successful expedition to crush Khiva in 1873. Peter the Great had attempted it in 1717; in 1839 Czar Nicholas I and General Perofski had had no better success.

To diminish the difficulties of crossing the desert, Kauffmann divided his invading army into five columns, each 4,000 strong, to approach Khiva by different routes. Before this new campaign began, however, assurances were communicated to the British Government during a special mission to London undertaken by Count Schouvaloff (who since 1866 had been chief of the Russian secret police).[19]

During this special mission to England in January 1873, said the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville, Schouvaloff had assured him that "not only was it far from the Emperor's intention to take possession of Khiva, *but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it* and directions given that the conditions imposed should be such as would not in any way lead to prolonged occupation of Khiva".

> "We were told by Schouvalov that the objective of the expedition was to punish acts of brigandage, to recover fifty Russian prisoners, and to teach the Khan that such conduct on his part could not be continued with the impunity in which the moderation of Russia had led him to believe."[20]

However Rawlinson pointed out in a subsequent note, written for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in 1874, that the Russian Foreign Office in St Petersburg "was disinclined from the commencement to offer any explanation to England on the subject of the Khiva expedition, alleging it was a purely Russian affair. . . . The Emperor's instructions to Count Schouvaloff on his mission to England, as well as his injunctions to Kauffmann against annexing any part of the Khiva territory, being thus given in opposition to the views of the Foreign Office, it was foreseen by the politicians of St Petersburg, at an early stage, that they would be rendered nugatory."

RAWLINSON HAD already disclosed his personal reactions to Count Schouvaloff's mission in his "Notes on Khiva", read before the Royal Geographical Society of London on 24 March 1873:

> "When Lord Granville on the direct authority of the Emperor's most trusted minister gave this positive assurance to Parliament, great satisfaction was expressed throughout England, but I ventured to point out at the time the extreme difficulty of giving practical effect to His Imperial Majesty's benevolent intentions. To evacuate the country indeed immediately after its occupation, and to retire within the old limits of the Empire, would be not only to sacrifice all the prestige of success, all the advantages indeed of advance, but to compromise very seriously the whole Russian position in Central Asia. I was confident therefore, whatever might be the Emperor's personal feelings on the question, that such an impotent conclusion could never have entered into the calculations of the astute politicians who planned the enterprise."

RETURNING TO the theme of the freedom of action enjoyed by the Russian military commanders—or rather, as he put it, ". . . the impunity with which military officers in Russia can overstep their instructions . . ."—Rawlinson in 1874 (the year following Khiva's absorption into the Russian empire) added a note to his 1868 "Memorandum on the Central Asia Question":

> "It is believed that General Kauffmann was absolutely forbidden to annex territory in accordance with the Emperor's assurances to that effect communicated to the British Government through Count Schouvaloff, before the commencement of the campaign; yet when it was found that he had concluded a treaty at its termination, incorporating the whole Delta of the Oxus in the Russian Empire, and thus falsifying his sovereign's promise, no further notice was taken of his contumacy than was implied by a temporary absence from his command, to which it is understood he is now returning armed with almost plenary powers."

In a further intervention in 1874, and adding to his "Notes on Khiva", Rawlinson wrote that:

> "Count Schouvaloff is said to have been greatly shocked at the terms of the Khivan Treaty, and to have requested the Emperor either to disavow the promises which he had made to Lord Granville in His Majesty's name or to repudiate the course pursued by General Kauffmann in annexing Khivan territory to Russia. The Emperor, however, under pressure from the Foreign Office decided on adopting a middle course, which consisted in publishing in the Official Gazette Nov 30 1873, an explanation of the circumstances under which Russia had been compelled to retain in her own hands the territory on the right bank of the river, and to establish the military post of Petro-Alexandrovsk for its protection. It is possible that had it been left to the Emperor's personal discretion he would have disavowed the Khiva Treaty; but, as General Kauffmann was vested with full powers, there was diplomatically no necessity for ratification, and it further so happened, as if to obviate the chance of his arrangements being interfered with, that the text of the treaty was published in the Turkestan Gazette before it was seen at St Petersburg, an irregularity which General Kauffmann afterwards described as an *'affaire de bureau'* for which he was not responsible."

TO ALL THIS, Rawlinson was able to add an intriguing report of a conversation with General Kauffmann in December 1873. It bears the stamp of "diplomatic sources", although here Rawlinson (understandably, perhaps,

[19] Count Peter Schouvaloff (1827-89), Russian Ambassador. During his visit he also arranged the marriage between Queen Victoria's second son—Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh—and the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, only daughter of the Emperor Alexander II.

[20] *Parliamentary Papers, Central Asia*, No. 1 (1873), p. 12.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

given that he is by now writing so close to events) is not specific. This conversation with the Russian commander is so closely aligned with Rawlinson's own judgments that it is difficult to imagine that his convictions were not heavily reinforced by it.

> "In reference to the late expedition to Khiva, His Excellency [General Kauffmann] said that His Imperial Majesty had most strictly commanded him to retire from the Khanate immediately after the conquest of the place, and the infliction of a penalty on the Khan and his people, and under no circumstances to annex to Russia any portion of the Khiva territory. *The General had however found that he could not possibly evacuate the Khanate at once without sacrificing all the advantages, resulting from the expedition*, and without leaving the Khanate a prey to the Turcomans and to internal commotions. His Excellency, therefore, wrote to the Emperor, explaining the circumstances which compelled him to remain there and act as he had done, and the Emperor in reply approved of his conduct and of the annexation of the lands along the right bank of the Oxus."

RAWLINSON rightly believed that "it would be impossible to maintain affairs on their present footing. Either the position must be strengthened by expanding lines of communication connecting the Oxus with the Caspian on one side and the Samarkand frontier on the other or abandoned. Khiva had been a stepping stone to the subjugation of the Turcomans."[21] This, as Rawlinson concluded, immediately affected British interests.

> "This source of danger and the particular direction it would take at once excited the interest of an observant and experienced officer Mr R. Thomson then in charge of Her Majesty's mission in Teheran, reporting to the FO in 1869, 'This danger would appear to be imminent for in order to open a road to the Oxus from the Caspian the Russians would have to construct forts and station troops within the Turcoman country through which it will pass . . . and this being done the Turcoman tribes will all sooner or later be brought under the protection and authority of Russia. The desert across which the Russians now propose to establish a line of communication with Central Asia is ill adapted for the purpose, the supply of water being insufficient for caravans crossing the plains and the heat in summer being excessive. It is possible that before long they will find these difficulties insurmountable and they may seek a more practicable route . . . this will be found by skirting along the hills . . . in the direction of Merv, which is not more than four marches from the Oxus and within ten easy stages of Herat.'"[22]

Percipient though Ronald Thomson no doubt was in grasping and reporting this crucial possibility, it was no revelation to Sir Henry Rawlinson's unwavering eye. He added this commentary to Thomson's dispatch:

> "I would only supplement this pregnant passage by suggesting that the advantages of the Attock route from the Caspian to Merv could hardly require to be discovered by accident as Mr Thomson charitably supposes, but were in all probability thoroughly well known to Russian strategists long before troops were despatched from Petrovsk and in fact had great weight in determining the government in the first instance to send forth so serious an expedition."

[21] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "Later Phases of the Central Asia Question", *England and Russia in the East* (1875).

[22] *Parliamentary Papers, Central Asia*, No. 2, 1873, p. 20.

[23] Field-Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar: achieved pacification of Afghanistan, 1880; Commander in Chief in India and a member of the Government of India. See his *Forty-One Years in India*, p. 510. The "protected ally" was the Amir of Afghanistan. Roberts was quoting the words used by Gladstone when asking the House of Commons to approve appropriations to meet the Afghan emergency.

[24] The Durand Line was named after Sir Mortimer Durand, leader of the British mission to Kabul in 1893 to open negotiations to delimit the Indo-Afghan border.

MERV WAS THE LAST of the Khanates of Central Asia to fall. A Kiplingesque jingle survived to stir the memory.

> *From Merv, last home of the free-lance,*
> *The Clansmen are scattered far,*
> *And the Turcoman horses are harnessed*
> *To the guns of the Russian Czar.*

Merv submitted to the Russians in 1883. That conquest brought Imperial Russia down to the northern frontier of Afghanistan. . . .

Then & Now

SUPPORTERS OF THE former British policy of Masterly Inaction, now cast to the winds, had diagnosed a disease in those, like Rawlinson, who were advocates of the Forward Policy: it was called "Mervousness". Merv was now a Russian possession, and Rawlinson had shown conclusively that—whether from accident or design—the continuous advance of Russia towards India was certain, and that England had been right to prepare for the contact. We have the word of Lord Roberts that by 1885 Britain was on the point of declaring war with Russia over Afghanistan and against her "active interference with the authority of a sovereign—our protected ally who had committed no offence".[23] Protracted negotiations with St Petersburg in the 1890s, over "the outrageous demands made by the Russian members of the Boundary Commission as to the direction which the line of delimitation between Russian and Afghan territory should take", in the end led in 1896 to an agreed delimitation of the northern frontier of Afghanistan, and of Russian and British influence, at the Durand Line.[24]

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This rectification of frontiers withstood the creeping pressure from the north for some 80 years, until Christmas Eve of 1979—when Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan and occupied Kabul, and a new President was installed to replace the one murdered during the Soviet coup.

In the light of the long history of the Russians in Central Asia, it seems unrealistic to suppose that, when the Politburo took the decision to invade, they did not foresee the consequences. They must have known the price they would have to pay, but they regarded Afghanistan as falling within the arbitrary provisions of the Brezhnev Doctrine.

To an as yet unknowable extent, Mr Gorbachov has now called a halt to this progress. But the recent Soviet withdrawal overshadows the fact that it took place under conditions of Soviet choosing. What will become of and what will be the influence of the thousands of Soviet-trained specialists embedded in the Afghanistan governments of recent years? Who will control the huge bases that the Russians have built? Will there be a northern redoubt from which to give expression to a policy of *reculer pour mieux sauter*?

In his time, Rawlinson held that there were certain general principles to be followed in dealing with Afghanistan.

> "The feeling of patriotism as known in Europe cannot exist among the Afghans for there is no common country. The Nation consists of a mere collection of tribes of unequal power and divergent habits held together more or less by the personal character of the chief who rules them. In its place there is found a strong and turbulent love of individual liberty which naturally rebels against authority and would be equally impatient of control whether exercised by English or Russians or Persians."[25]

The assertion of the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, that (as Xan Smiley reported in *The Daily Telegraph* last June) "the Soviet generals do not think they have lost a war" and that the troops "are leaving Afghanistan with a sense of duty done" sounds hollow, and also by now, perhaps, familiar—if one recalls the report of the conversation with General Kauffmann in December 1873. Rawlinson, in his October 1865 *Quarterly Review* article, considered that Britain's disastrous defeat in the First Afghan War of 1842 was the event in which both the Sikh invasion of India in 1845[26] and, more remotely, the great Indian Mutiny of 1857 had their origins.

> "It was not so much our retirement from Afghanistan in 1842, as the circumstances under which that retirement was effected, that disparaged our position in Central Asia. Had we withdrawn in an orderly and honourable manner, and in pursuance of an arrangement with the parties into whose hands we had committed the government of the country, the effects of our diasters would have been mitigated, if not entirely removed. Retiring as we did without any understanding and pursued down to the last pass debouching on the plains, the previous ill effects on our reputation were no doubt enhanced, the general impression being both in India and in Central Asia that we were fairly driven from the mountains. It is not unusual, even, to find a belief among our own officers, that in retiring from Afghanistan we yielded to superior strength; whereas in reality the country was more completely in our power at the moment of our retreat than it had been at any previous period of the occupation."

As it was then for the British, so might it be now for Mr Gorbachov. The impression is that this time it is the Russians who have been "fairly driven from the mountains". If for no other reason, a reading of history suggests that Mr Gorbachov will strive mightily to avoid the British experience.

In one of the most highly visible departures in all history, and behind a screen of reassurances, the Russians have retired behind the passes, but the footfalls of the Red Army echo in the memory. *Pravda* (15 February 1989) has left behind the official explanation for why it all happened:

> "Moscow had no aggressive intention with regard to Afghanistan. . . . The introduction of our troops was linked to ensuring security on our southern borders."

As the world watched Mr Gorbachov's retreating back, who would not remark on the similarities between this and the "Imperious necessity" of Prince Gortchakoff's manifesto to all the courts of Europe in 1864 and those "positive assusrances" of Count Schouvaloff?

The most challenging of Rawlinson's insights remain those he put forward concerning the conquest of Khiva, that first and most famous stride in the Russian march into Central Asia: his belief that it would be equally injurious for the Russians to stay or to go.

> "[Russia] has volunteered a declaration, and apparently in all honesty, that she has no intention to annex the country, or hold it as a conquered province; but she has not sufficiently considered, I think, that by thus evacuating the country after having once occupied and ruled it, she will lose far more than she gained before. Orientals can only explain such evacuations, not altogether wrongly, as the result of weakness, and let me ask what effect such a serious blow to her prestige would be likely to have on the kindred communities of Tashkent and Samarkand? We have had ourselves bitter experience of thus trifling with oriental feeling . . . to retire within the old limits of the Empire would be to compromise very seriously the whole Russian position in Central Asia."[27]

There is suggestive evidence that the Russian Government must dread this possible effect, in which case Mr Gorbachov may have to add some water to *Perestroika's* heady wine. To many remarkable similarities in the Russian and British political experience concerning Central Asia might be added the

[25] Sir Henry Rawlinson, "Later Phases of the Central Asia Question", December 1874.

[26] The invasion led to the battle of Sobraon, between the Sikh and British Armies, in 1846.

[27] Extracts from Rawlinson's "Notes on Khiva".

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

recent trial, which centred on corruption in Tashkent, of Mr Brezhnev's son-in-law, the deputy Interior Minister of the USSR, Yuri Churbanov. That trial seems intended, more widely, to discredit the past—one can discern overtones of the impeachment for corruption of Warren Hastings in 1788.[28]

Even though the great vicissitudes of the Afghan reality have come to the Russians, as they did in the last century to the British, it may be doubted whether Soviet long-term strategic investment in Afghanistan can or will be abandoned. To do so would invite a question which must gnaw away not merely at the composure but at the integrity of an empire. Where *are* the frontiers of the Soviet Union?

[28] Governor-General of India, accused of "high crimes and misdemeanours". His trial lasted seven years, and symbolised the struggle between the East India Company and the British Crown for control of Indian affairs. He was found "Not Guilty" in 1795 (see Conor Cruise O'Brien, "Burke's Great Melody", ENCOUNTER, February 1989).

A Cold Fish

You cleared off
Into Upper Space
Taking your first small giant steps
Into the Primaeval Future
While I stayed,

Coral-jointed a cage
Of nerve-threaded bone,
Fleshing it out with rippling muscle,
Knotting together the deep, welling ages
Of fright and flight,

A twitch of my streamlined wings
Keeping me safe,

Shaping up
In the queerest ways
To the all-consuming challenge,
The whelming, drowning influence
Of Cold Water,

Coming out of my shell
To conquer the World
With love 'n' warpaint, guts and chainmail,
A show of backbone,
A gritting of teeth

And this rigid fanatic's stare
That never looks forward to anything

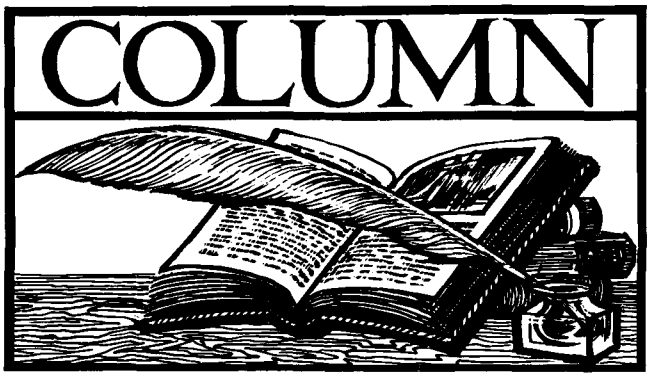
Else; head never raised
(Unless I should get
  A half-frigid mouth
  Hooked on your faithful, singing line)
From a shoalful of furies,

Fears, flirtations,
Fatherly flutters,
A fishy identification with place,
A thirst like an Ocean
I'll never drown:

The unblinking dreams
Of an outgrown brain.

Gareth Calway

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



POLITICS IS often called the art of the possible: but in ordinary citizens' experience it tends to be the art of the scratch crew. I'm thinking of the assorted crowd one meets on sailing holidays. Here they come, clumping into the cockpit in bright plastic deck-boots: the bearded young salt and his shy, landlubber girl-friend; the plump, middle-aged couple on what must be their third honeymoon; the morose, cadaverous, lonely stockbroker; the outdoor vamp; the teenage ship's rat. It's a 40-foot boat, you understand.

The chemistry of the group is unpredictable. Will either couple quarrel? Will the vamp make for the stockbroker, or the ship's rat? Who'll get a riding turn on one of the winches? Who'll hog the helming? Who'll somehow never do the dishes? Who'll turn out to be the pariah who unites the rest?

We put up with all this for an obvious reason: we have a common goal. So do political parties; but, except for single-issue groups like the Greens (and not always, even in their case), no party is homogeneous. To secure a measure we like, we have to swallow rhetoric and policies that may be deeply abhorrent. Voting the ticket is the curse of party politics. What we really want is to pick and choose.

Hence the appeal of referenda, single-issue groups, and extremist lobbies. Each seems to promise short-circuiting the muddle and compromise that are the art of the possible. To pursue the nautical metaphor, each tempts us with the hope of a single-minded skipper and a disciplined racing crew. But life on board a serious racer would not suit everyone—or anyone, if it went on too long. And the history of politics has written some blood-stained question-marks on régimes which prize unanimous efficiency above all else.

So we're driven back to the scratch crew—even in wartime. C. Day Lewis expressed it pithily in an eight-line poem during World War II. The second stanza ran:

> *It is the logic of our times,*
> *No subject for immortal verse—*
> *That we who lived by honest dreams*
> *Defend the bad against the worse.*

"The bad" was no doubt the pre-Welfare State, with marked class differences, poor social security, and gross injustices in education, health care, and conditions of work. "The worse" was Fascism and Nazism. In some respects, the scratch crew was up against the ocean racers—a point repeatedly made in wartime propaganda, stressing the citizens' armies and "muddling through" of democratic amateurs against the "war machine" of Mussolini and Hitler.

C. Day Lewis entitled his poem "Where are the War Poets?" This was a cry raised earlier by patriotic literary journalists, presumably in search of rousing, memorable, even singable verse that might be the stuff to give the troops. A few writers attempted it: no names, no pack-drill, as the phrase then went. British troops had other interests. If they memorised verse, it tended to be *The Good Ship Venus* or *Eskimo Nell*; and what they sang had little to do with patriotic fervour. For a single "We're going to hang out the washing on the Siegfried Line" there were scores of sentimental ditties, including one—*Lilli Marlene*—borrowed from the enemy. Their marching songs, some carried over from World War I, included such unmartial airs as *Here's to good old whisky, She'll be coming round the mountain, Roll out the barrel,* and *Run, rabbit, run.*

Calls for "War Poets" seemed oblivious of the fact that the best of the very fine poetry prompted by World War I had expressed disgust, disillusion, weariness, nostalgia for peace and a longing to rehumanise the stereotyped Enemy. So did the poems of the later war. As Sidney Keyes put it in a poem called "War Poet" written in 1942:

> *I am the man who looked for peace and found*
> *My own eyes barbed.*

This was the mood of much British poetry during World War II.

IT WAS MATCHED by some of the fiction. (I refer to "real" fiction, not over-imaginative "memoirs".) Few serious writers attempted heroic epics, although many wrote of heroism under fire and bombing. Alan Munton, in a new study of *English Fiction of the Second World War*, has unearthed a number of largely forgotten novels, some of which sound unduly neglected.[1] He trains his critical searchlight longest, however, on Dan Billany's two novels of captivity, *The Cage* (written with David Dowie) and *The Trap*; on Henry Green's *Caught*; on Patrick Hamilton's *The Slaves of Solitude*; on David Holbrook's *Flesh Wounds*; on Olivia Manning's two trilogies; on Nicholas Monsarrat's *Three Corvettes* and *The Cruel Sea*; on the relevant volumes of Anthony Powell's *Music of Time* and C. P. Snow's *Strangers and Brothers* sequences; and especially on Evelyn Waugh.

Where these are not focusing on individual, personal experience—and sometimes when they are—they tend to create panoptic pictures of a society at war, often a finally triumphant "people's war". Evelyn Waugh's *Sword of Honour* trilogy is the main exception, carrying to extreme lengths a pessimistic defeatism which sees the post-War settlement as the triumph of chicanery, mediocrity, atheism, and *petit-bourgeois* materialism. This surely implies a romantically wistful view of pre-War society. "Perhaps we should think of it", suggests Alan Munton, ". . . as being like a story first heard in childhood, a fantasy that never loses its charm, but which it would be fatal to live by."

Fair enough: but what Alan Munton's book neglects is another category of British wartime writing, which might be called the *Soldatbildungsroman*. Miniature examples of this, in the form of short stories or subjective documentaries,

[1] *English Fiction of the Second World War*. By ALAN MUNTON. Faber, £4.99.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

appeared frequently in John Lehmann's *Penguin New Writing* and other wartime pocket magazines. The typical *Soldatbildungsroman* took a diffident suburban middle-class lad, sometimes from a private school, and thrust him (as so many were) into the profane and strenuous oppression of service training. "Wakey-wakey, rise and shine!" roared a thousand barrack-room corporals. "Can you take a pace forward?" demanded the sergeant-major. "Oh no you can't: I'm standing on your hair." Blanco webbing cleaner, brass polish, and hot spoons for "boning" the toe-caps of boots were essential munitions in this war against civilian individuals. Making a man of the reluctant hero meant making a slave of him first. In the end, "the new lot"—the title of an Army training film that became, expanded, *The Way Ahead*—would prove in battle the value of the discipline learned on the barrack square. The most life-like examples of this school of fiction, without the battlefield apotheosis, were the Army stories of J. Maclaren-Ross. In his next edition, Alan Munton should consider them. They echo the experience of every wartime conscript or volunteer that I know.

This, even more than fighting the enemy, seems to me the characteristic theme of British wartime fiction. Military action, after all, was familiar from histories and novels of warfare. What was different, in World War I already but still more in World War II, was the experience of the citizens' armies—the culture-clash of social classes and the confrontation with regimental ideals.

Traumatic as all this was for sensitive souls being turned into soldiers, it looks pretty pale alongside the crises faced at the same time by men and women across the Channel. In France and other Occupied countries, there were not only danger and deprivation: there were moral dilemmas as well. These too were reflected in the literature. Wartime French poetry, anthologised most notably by the late Pierre Seghers,[2] has been extensively studied: but less close attention has been paid to wartime fiction. Now, Margaret Atack, lecturer in French at the University of Leeds, has published a book based upon her thesis on the subject: *Literature and the French Resistance: Cultural Politics and Narrative Forms, 1940-1950*.[3]

As the subtitle may suggest, the book is not free from technicalities. If, like me, you have to look up words like "diegetic" and "metonymy" (here misspelt, once, "metyonymy"), you may find yourself echoing Dylan Thomas's sigh of "Isn't education wonderful!" You may need dictionary help, too, with "synchronic" and "diachronic", "transformational", or even "discourse" as used here. Regard the jargon as lit.-crit. campaign ribbons or wound stripes to prove that the author's no raw recruit. Forgive, too, the book's slightly bizarre organisation, with interesting facts buried in the end-of-chapter notes, and book titles quoted, at the start of new sections, with no reminder of author or date. These are mere superficial hazards: the thought and learning packed into the book are remarkable. It certainly repays careful study.

MARGARET ATACK divides Resistance writing into three categories: literature of persuasion, novels of unity, and novels of ambiguity. The first—persuasion—tends to be what its champions might call "committed" and its critics "propaganda", some of it designed to bear witness to its epoch, and some to promote specific views and actions. *Les Lettres françaises* assiduously preached that those who were not *for* the Resistance were willy-nilly *against* it—a true political analysis, no doubt, but hardly likely to produce good literature, which deals in nuance as much as in certainty. But evaluation of this sort, it soon appears, is not Margaret Atack's main concern. If it were, she would surely pay less respect to Louis Aragon's fictional output. Instead, what interests her are literary strategies, especially as regards narrative. At one point, she even lists Resistance activities (train derailments, etc.) in an offhand way which suggests that she regards them as routine rituals rather than the very substance of the struggle and the books.

The literature of persuasion shades off into "novels of unity". This section takes in varying views of the enemy and the invader: the Vichy collaborators—the Nazis—their "capitalist allies"—Germany as a "barbarian" rival to France—"good" Germans who stand for the "real" Germany of Goethe and Heine. Against, more or less, these adversary figures, the "novels of unity" set individual Frenchmen of every kind, gradually uniting across class and political barriers as even quite small symbolic events stir their consciences or their pride. These books might well be called instances of the *Bildungsroman* of the *résistant*.

[2] Pierre Seghers. *La Résistance et ses poètes* (Marabout université, two vols, 1978).

[3] *Literature and the French Resistance: Cultural Politics and Narrative Forms, 1940-1950*. By MARGARET ATACK. Manchester University Press, £29.95.

R L F

The initials stand for the **Royal Literary Fund**, which for nearly 200 years has helped authors in serious need and distress.

The RLF receives no subsidies and has to balance its own books with the works of others. So . . . if you are a profitable writer anxious to share your success with those less fortunate, or a general reader prepared to show appreciation of literature, the Secretary will be glad to hear from you.

The Committee is always ready, too, to consider in confidence applications from writers of approved literary merit who have fallen on hard times.

The Royal Literary Fund
144 Temple Chambers
Temple Avenue
London EC4Y 0DT

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So far, the literature considered has one trait in common—salutary, high-minded myth. Doubtless many French people were tipped into the Resistance, suddenly or gradually, by admirable motives. But active *résistants* were at first few on the ground. *La relève* and the STO—supposedly voluntary and later compulsory work in German factories—were the most efficient recruiting-sergeants for the *maquis*. And at the end of the War, when old scores were paid off and collaborators punished, some very odd, sometimes sinister figures appeared in FFI armbands with pistols cocked.

IT WAS NATURAL, therefore, for conscientious writers to supply Margaret Atack's third main category, "novels of ambiguity", in which the multiform Resistance went under the microscope and came out smirched. Unsurprisingly, these novels—some by equivocal authors such as Marcel Aymé or Pierre Drieu la Rochelle—are among the most interesting. They include two of my own favourites, Jean-Louis Bory's *Mon Village à l'heure allemande* and René Fallet's *Banlieue sud-est*. But the major writer in this category is of course Albert Camus; and to him Margaret Atack devotes the best passages in her book.

La Peste, she agrees with many in believing, is an allegory of the Occupation; and she makes the case persuasively well. Camus himself, she points out, saw the book in that light; and although others questioned how closely the allegory fitted, this is undoubtedly a major part of its thrust. Personally, I think it transcends contingent historical comparisons, and deals with general, universal problems too. But there need be no contradiction between these two readings; and Margaret Atack successfully relates her own to the argument in this section of her book. "I know for a definite fact", says Tarrou in the novel, ". . . that *each of us carries the plague* in themselves, because nobody, no, nobody in the world, is immune." The temptation towards Fascism or Nazism—*la tentation totalitaire*—is not confined to those on the Right, or to those who succumb to it. There were germs, and villains, among *résistants* and ordinary Frenchmen too.

There were also, as is often forgotten, some healthy antibodies in Vichy. Henri Frenay's memoirs, among other sources, make this clear; and Margaret Atack rather regrets that so little literature has explored the moral labyrinths of Pétain's supporters, sympathisers, hangers-on, and dupes. It would be dispiriting, but useful, to push the analysis of collaboration beyond the point where Louis Malle's film *Lacombe Lucien* left off.

A further neglected area, which even Margaret Atack's study barely explores, is the vast no-man's-land that lay like a buffer state between collaboration and Resistance. Jean Dutourd's 1952 novel *Au bon beurre*, about profiteering, was one of the first to broach this territory; but, although Margaret Atack mentions it, she pays it no serious heed. Ninetta Jucker's personal memoir, *Curfew in Paris*, seemed a revelation when I first read it in Italian in the 1950s: it was not published in Britain until 1960. Now, of course, ordinary life under the Occupation has been chronicled by Henri Amouroux in seven hefty volumes: but few really substantial novels on the period have yet emerged.

If and when they do, we may be in for surprises. One of the failings of good novelists is to make their characters far subtler and more complex than many real people actually are. Dumb oxen do exist; so do straightforward men and women. You'd hardly think so to read, say, Henry James. And while it was wholly understandable that a generation of French novelists should react against the gung-ho falsities of much Resistance literature and many Resistance films and "memoirs", I have a suspicion that the pendulum may have swung too far towards cynical mistrust. I know good people who worked for the Resistance without hesitation: it was the only thing to do. Perhaps the time has come to rehabilitate them and their like. Oh yes: they were a scratch crew. But they knew they were all in the same boat.

M

He Wakes Alone

He wakes alone in the warm white room,
the ceiling spread and suffused with light;
there is something, something he wants to recall
but his eyelids drop with their soft drugged weight.

He wakes again to a girl's round face,
from some other time, some other place—
and his son in an aura a long way off
in the distant air at the foot of the bed.

With an effort of sense he's aware of their flowers,
of the wire in his nose, of the nurses
who drift and slip in and out in their shadow-play.
His children smile but their eyes are tears.
There is something, something he wants to ask,
and something they dare not say.

Stuart Henson

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Michael Hulse

Josef Gebhard

I

At breakfast he'd smack off the cap of the egg,
back went his head, and in went the slime

in a single lippy slurp, and he'd slip
the empty shell back down on the plate

where a shiny dribble ran from the side
like slobber dripping from an idiot's lip.

My stomach flipped. The shell sat in a
puddle of eggy phlegm flecked with blubber.

He'd dab the glistening corners of his mouth
and happily smack his lips and sometimes slap

the table edge, red-faced and satisfied,
his manchild smile simple and wide.

II

When he'd mended from his wound at Verdun
he was taken prisoner in the Carpathians.

The Russians transported him to Astrakhan:
a high, alien sky. In camp he nearly starved.

He volunteered to clean the hospital latrines.
That way he shared the patients' food.

After Brest-Litovsk he walked
two thousand miles, his feet voting for home,

wanting the vineyards and the hills
and the riverbank fragrance of nettles and earth

and the knowledge that he was where he belonged,
his heart pleading for home though his head

said a generation had been betrayed.
The Germans at the front turned him away:

a Bolshevik agent, they could tell.
It took him months to return where he started from.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

III

His handkerchiefs were cotton with broad borders,
a faded white like sloeflower or yesterday's snow,

and smelled of the laundry room
and male worsted pocket.

He'd sit in the sun on a kitchen chair,
in shirtsleeves and braces, the cotton square

draped over his face to show that he was resting.
Great hands lay clasped like gloves on his breast.

IV

I think of him walking in the darkening valley:
the laden apple trees on crutches

like cripples in Grosz cartoons
were emblems of the times,

that orchard fullness in the midst of loss,
the heavy sweet-smelling headiness,

and the bad-tempered buzz of a waspish community
come to savour the sugary taste of decay.

Death's republic. Everyone could vote
to eat the rotting fruit.

V

Don't poke at it he told me. I obeyed.
We stood in the resin-scented shade

of pines, watching the ants that milled
tirelessly in the unresting hill.

The hill was made of needles, high as my chest.
I wondered how many ants lived there, and guessed

a boy's figure in millions. He took
the handkerchief from his pocket, shook

it open, and placed it carefully on the hill.
Now watch he told me. And I watched, until

the cloth was black with panic-stricken ants:
round and round and round in the dance

of fear. *Now put your nose to it* he said,
flapping the handkerchief clear. And my head

instantly filled with the formic pungency,
the acid smell of angst. He took my hand.

I had been shown what I had to understand
and couldn't even dare to wonder why.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Oracles & Their Cessation

A Tribute to Julian Jaynes—By D. C. Stove

In the 5th century BC in Greece, and again in Europe in the 18th century AD, there was a period of what historians call Enlightenment. They mean by this that religion then lost the undisputed sway which it normally exercises over human life. Such periods are rare, but when they do come, they come with a strange easiness. People like Voltaire or Euripides are no one's idea of profound thinkers, and yet, in scarcely more than a generation, the immortal gods succumb to their attacks as meekly as dew to the sun.

Partly for this reason it is a great mystery, to the people of the Enlightenment, how it was that religion had acquired its hold over human life in the first place. How did an incubus so easily dislodged ever get into the driver's seat, and occupy it unchallenged for so long? A question to be asked, indeed.

For Enlightenment critics, there are only two answers to it (broadly speaking) that anyone has ever been able to think of. One is the imposition theory: that religion is a racket. The other is the madness theory: that religion is a form of insanity. Of course there have been many variants of each of these two broad theories. The 19th century, for example, furnished a Marxist variant of the imposition theory, and the 20th a Freudian variant of the madness theory.

Unfortunately, all of the known variants of either theory are nearly worthless. The two theories are genuinely at odds with one another: a madman can hardly be a successful racketeer, or even a source of profit to racketeers. The trouble is that each theory is also at odds with most of the facts. In the history of Christianity, say, or of Islam, there is not much more madness than there is in the history of everything else. In fact a religion, once it has gained wide currency, usually acts as a support of *sanity:* religious people are actually less likely to be mad, or at least to go mad, than people of the Enlightenment. Likewise there is little, if any, more racketeering in the history of religion than there is in the history of everything else; and a religious person is distinctly less likely to be a racketeer than an Enlightened person is.

The result is that, to heirs of the Enlightenment such as myself, the reasons for the very existence of religion have remained an absolute mystery. Nor is this a minor matter: not to understand religion is, quite simply, not to understand nine-tenths of human history. There is no mystery about why there is farming or industry, why there is instruction of the young, why there is architecture, medicine, or law. But the most salient fact of all human history is this: that all those things, and many others, have almost always been suffused through-and-through with religion, and subordinated to it. All right: but why does religion exist?

This is the question of questions concerning *Homo sapiens*. And I want to commend—and argue with—a book published some dozen years ago which to my mind comes closer to answering that question than everything else I have read about the matter put together. Its author is Julian Jaynes, a psychologist at Princeton University. The book is *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Houghton Mifflin, 1976; Allen Lane, 1979). The weight of original thought in it is so great that it makes me uneasy for the author's well-being: the human mind is not built to support such a burden. I would not be Julian Jaynes if they paid me a thousand dollars an hour.

Religion is not at all the only thing which Jaynes's book is intended to throw light on; though it is, I think, where he is most successful. Among the other subjects of the book are poetry, song, music, "possession", hypnotism, and schizophrenia. Above all his theory is, as the title of the book implies, a theory of the origin of consciousness. Jaynes has the extraordinary idea that consciousness—by which he does not mean intelligence, or learning-capacity, or anything like that, but self-scanning, inner life, *self*-consciousness—is new. Biologically new, in that it is no older than *Homo sapiens*; and even historically new, in that it began only at some time in the second millennium BC.

Until that time, Jaynes thinks, we were what he calls "bicameral": meaning by this that the right hemisphere of our brains had a certain function—a function of supreme importance which it does not now have. Namely, it was the source of *the voices of dead rulers*, hallucinated by the living. The architecture of early civilised men, Jaynes argues, and above all their burial-practices, can be understood on only one supposition: that the voice of a recently-dead ruler was *still heard*, and *still carried authority*.

These hallucinated voices were the germs, Jaynes thinks, of

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

both religion and civilisation. They furnished our first ideas of gods, and they also made possible, for the first time, social control out of earshot, and hence large, organised human groups. We all knew, in those days, what to do, because at every turn a god told us what to do. Indeed, it seemed to us that it was really the god who did it; just as, in *The Iliad*, whatever is done is done not by Achilles (say) or Agamemnon, but by some god. In bicameral men, Jaynes says, this authoritative voice "*was* volition". We were mere intelligent automata: simply some two-legged livestock which the gods happened to own. We were all permanently hypnotised; or, more accurately, schizophrenic.

This state of mind was brought to an end, in the second millennium BC, by some catastrophe: Jaynes hints at a catastrophe of extraterrestrial origin, but he is exceedingly vague about the whole matter. Anyway, as a result of this event, whatever it was, the hallucinated voices grew fainter; or multiple and therefore confusing; or audible only after elaborate induction-procedures (of prayer, or purification, etc.); or audible only to persons of a specialised caste (priests, prophets, etc.); or audible only at special places favoured by gods (temples, oracles, etc.); and they finally fell silent altogether. This is "the breakdown of the bicameral mind".

Inner life begins. The world of *The Iliad* gives way to the world of *The Odyssey*. We think of the world of *The Iliad* as a *cruel* world, but even a little reflection suffices to show that that is not really right: while there is much slaughter in *The Iliad*, there is very little cruelty. The real foreignness of that world consists, rather, in this: that it has absolutely nothing in it, except a plentiful supply of gods, plus assorted hardware—boats, armour, weapons—and men who have little more inner life than their helmets do. Odysseus, on the other hand, is just like you and me: ducking and diving, doing the best he can. He is always inwardly scanning alternative possibilities, both of action and belief, and he has to settle on just one of them for himself *without authority*. He has to, because natural authority, internalised authority, has now vanished from human life. For the first time, the possibility of *duplicity* has come into the world, with the mountain of consequences—psychological, moral, and political—which that entails. The priceless gift, and crushing burden, of consciousness has arrived.

Sources of Error

THIS IS, AS FAR AS I KNOW, that rarest of things: an absolutely original idea. It is also an idea of most various and far-reaching consequences. Kepler, looking back at what he had done in astronomy, once said: "I have touched mountains: it is amazing, what they give forth." Jaynes must have felt something like that, as his theory unfolded its consequences before his mind; and I think he was entitled to feel so.

He touches, at greater or less length, on a staggering number and variety of subjects, concerning which his theory has implications or suggestions that are not obvious at once. For example, the sound of ancient Greek poetry; the rhythm of "speaking in tongues"; the tirelessness of schizophrenics; the origin of moral evil; the "invisible playmates" of childhood; aristocratic ethics; and hundreds more. There must be others which he does not touch on at all: for example, his theory clearly ought to deliver something about that great weapon of Enlightenment, and peculiarity of conscious life, *humour*. Whatever topic he does touch, Jaynes almost always leaves on me the impression of someone who has got hold of a powerful new insight into human life and history. Several contemporary reviewers of the book compared Jaynes's theory with Freudianism; but, although this is saying very little, it is certainly a great deal better than that.

At the same time it will be obvious, even from the lightning-sketch which I have given of it, that his theory labours from the start under heavy objections. For one thing, it offends our ideas of evolutionary continuity by requiring us to suppose that consciousness suddenly appeared in *Homo sapiens*, without being foreshadowed by anything at all in our pre-human ancestors. There are, of course, variants of current evolutionary theory which postulate a certain amount of "jumpiness" in evolution; but (as the man said about the shaggy dog) not *that* damned jumpy.

To this objection, Jaynes replies indirectly but well (especially on pp. 379-403). Suppose, he says, that consciousness were not, as he thinks it is, a recent, superficial, and *learnt* capacity: suppose it were ancient, organic, anchored in our pre-human forebears. In that case it could not possibly be *turned off*, with ridiculous ease, by an authoritative voice whose instructions are then obeyed with a docility and completeness to which conscious life affords no parallel. Yet exactly that is what happens in hypnotism a thousand times every day.

This reply quite turns the tables, it seems to me, on the objection from continuity. In fact the whole of Jaynes's chapter on hypnotism is extremely important. But there is an even more serious, and even more obvious, objection to his theory.

The human brain is the most complicated bit of matter known to exist; yet Jaynes asks us to believe that some particular external event, which could hardly affect directly either our brains or our genes, brought about, in a few generations, a major change in our brain-functions. Now that is logically possible, of course, but it *sounds*, at least, like magic, or a miracle. What means are there, what mechanisms, by which such a cause could possibly bring about such an effect?

Jaynes's reply to this fundamental objection, or the closest he comes to replying to it, is on pages 122-25. He appeals to the immense surplus-capacity of the human brain, and to its extreme "plasticity": that is, the ease with which, in certain circumstances, a function located in one hemisphere of the brain can be transferred to the other, if its normal *locus* is damaged or diseased or surgically removed.

This reply seems to me not only inadequate, but hardly even relevant. What was questioned was not the likelihood of one brain-function, x, being transferred from one hemisphere to the other. It was the likelihood of one brain-function, x, being extinguished, and a new one, y, being created (in whatever location), in a short time, by some external and non-recurring cause. *That* is the fundamental and glaring offence which Jaynes's theory gives to our ideas of what is biologically likely. And he can do nothing, apparently, or least he *has* done nothing in this book, to palliate it. Nothing, except to show that, if such a thing *had* happened, an astounding

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

number of otherwise mysterious facts would receive an explanation!

I have already compared Jaynes with Kepler, whom we remember with honour for his three laws of planetary motion, and for almost nothing else. But in Kepler's own eyes those laws were propositions of very subordinate importance. What he chiefly valued himself on was, rather, his marginally-sane speculations of a theologico-geometrical character: how God had spaced the planetary orbits so as to accommodate the five regular solids, etc. But it was perfectly easy to separate the three planetary laws from this context in which Kepler had embedded them, and to "throw away the wrapper", so to speak. And that is exactly what, in the Enlightenment, Kepler's editors did; and, surely, rightly did.

IT IS WHAT I would like to do in Jaynes's case: to separate what is of permanent value in his theory (especially the part which relates to religion) from the context (which seems to me incredible) in which he embeds it. But while in Kepler's case it was easy to throw away the wrapper, I cannot see how to do it in Jaynes's case. In fact, I do not think anyone could do it. His theory fits together too well, despite the extreme heterogeneity of its materials: neurophysiological, archaeological, etymological, etc., etc.

But although I cannot see how to pare down or water down Jaynes's theory, I am certain that such a process is necessary. His theory is just too catastrophist, too external, too sharply dichotomous; he himself indirectly acknowledges this by various qualifications which he makes to it—not always consistently. I will give my reasons for saying this.

First, as I have said, I simply cannot see how micro-surgery could be performed on the human brain, in a short time, by some stray cosmic or geological blunt instrument (a Velikovskian comet, or whatever).

Then, as to the speed and the extent of the alleged change from bicamerality to consciousness, Jaynes wavers hopelessly. Bicamerality broke down in the second millennium BC, he says, and yet he also says that conscious Spaniards met bicameral Aztecs in Mexico in 1519 AD. We ourselves are said to contain, and to be surrounded by, what he keeps calling "vestiges" of the bicameral mind; but these "vestiges" are, by Jaynes's account, so massive and ubiquitous that it is simply absurd to call them vestiges. Sometimes he even suggests that *no one* is yet more than half-way through the transition from bicamerality to consciousness. It is impossible to reconcile these various suggestions.

These are instances in which, obviously enough, Jaynes has been tripped up by his preference for brightly-coloured and sharp-edged formulations. Another and a signal instance of the same fault is what he says about the *absolute* authoritativeness of the bicameral voices: for example (p. 202) that they "*were* man's volition". It is simply impossible to understand such a statement, taken literally.

Again, the theory is too dichotomous. It asks us to think of consciousness and hallucinated authoritative voices as two mutually-exclusive "control-systems". Yet Jaynes is constantly obliged to acknowledge that the two systems can be mixed in various degrees in different individuals, and can alternate in the same individual. As to their alternating, I would offer the case of Socrates as decisive. He was usually conscious, I suppose, if ever a man was. Yet in addition to his occasional trances (one of which kept him standing motionless in the open air for 20 hours) he had his inner voice or *daimon* (his "divine sign", he called it), which on various occasions told him not to do something he had been about to do. Assuming that this "voice" was actually hallucinated by him, and was not a mere "as-it-were" voice, such a case seems sufficient on its own to show that Jaynes's favourite categories are too sharp-edged.

Or take the matter of duplicity. This is quite central for Jaynes: he regards the capacity for deceit, along with the capacities for disguise and for suicide, as a distinctive mark of conscious man. Yet he informs us that a female chimpanzee will sometimes pretend to be interested in sex with a male when her sole real interest is in stealing the banana he is carrying. Now, a Darwin, or even a Lorenz, might be able to point out some important difference between such cases and *human* duplicity. But Jaynes's attempt to distinguish between them (pp. 219-20) is weak.

THESE ARE SOME of the reasons why I cannot swallow Jaynes's theory whole: they could be summed up in the words "too much drama". Yet his theory is so persuasive, at least as far as religion is concerned, that—as I have indicated—I hanker after a less lurid version of it, a "sub-theory" of his theory. Such a sub-theory might still have consciousness being as recent and superficial as Jaynes thinks it is, and might still have consciousness coming in because social control by hallucinated divine voices was going out. But I cannot actually carve out such a sub-theory from Jaynes's theory: there are just too many connecting fibres in it, running in every direction, for me to be able to see where the surgery could begin with any hope of success.

I should add, however, that even if we had such a sub-theory, there would still be a good reason for being very suspicious of it. For any recognisable sub-theory of Jaynes's would still have, like its parent, the suspicious feature that it invites us to do something we are only too prone to do—I mean, to deny or doubt or minimise the inner life of others.

That dogs can even feel pain, let alone have beliefs or the like, was denied by Descartes and his followers. That women have souls was denied (or so at least I have often read) by certain Muslim philosophers. Mao's China, whatever we may have consciously thought of it, really *seemed* to be a society of human ants, did it not? During World War II we were encouraged, and needed extremely little encouragement, to believe that Japanese soldiers and airmen were intelligent automata. (The Japanese are a hard case even now for some of us, apparently including Jaynes: on p. 159 he actually hints that the Emperor Hirohito *was* bicameral.) In many cases, as children turn into adolescents, their parents seem to them to turn into mere livestock. If we come across an adult fellow-citizen who cannot read silently, we get a sudden twinge of doubt as to whether he has an inner life at all; and this despite the fact that reading silently is an accomplishment so recent, and so inessential to conscious life, that it was entirely unknown throughout classical antiquity.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now, I ask you: when we know we are so prone to this mistake, even where we are in a position to avoid it, how can we trust ourselves to conclude, with the confidence that Jaynes does, that Hammurabi and Achilles had little or no inner life? How much do we know about Hammurabi or Achilles? It is true (and it is Jaynes's starting-point) that they make on us an impression of almost inexpressible foreignness. It is further true, and it is part of Jaynes's achievement to have shown, that their foreignness is in many respects uncannily like the foreignness of the schizophrenic or the deeply-hypnotised. But it is impossible for us, situated as we are, to be rationally confident that we have here *knowledge of the absence* of inner life, and not just another humdrum case of *the absence of knowledge* of inner life.

It is an old observation (at least as old as Descartes) that if you look down from a tall building at people in the street, you get an illusion of looking at automata. No doubt this is connected with the unique importance of the face (cf. Jaynes's pp. 120-22). But distance in time, assisted as it nearly always is by ignorance, also tends to produce the same illusion. Everyone who has read a lot of history must have noticed this fact, and since Jaynes's theory *must* receive illicit help from this familiar source of error, he ought to have done a good deal to "discount" for it. But he does nothing at all.

Voices of the Dead

JAYNES'S BOOK—although I can neither accept his overall theory, nor separate out of it, as a sub-theory, his treatment of religion—throws more light on religion than everything else I have read on that subject. My position is therefore an unsatisfactory one, to put it mildly. Since I cannot see how to get out of it, I will try instead to draw others into it. That is, I will try to convey something of the extraordinary power of Jaynes's treatment of religion. He sees the problem, in all its scope and strangeness, and he never loses sight of it. Why *should* almost all human history be a tale of "the slow withdrawing tide of divine voices and presences", and of ever-renewed attempts, through prophets or poetry or peyote or whatever, to establish contact with "a lost ocean of authority" (p. 320)? This is the question of questions concerning our species.

Does it seem only a slight merit, to see this problem and never lose sight of it? It should not, because in fact it is an enormous merit, which scarcely anyone ever achieves. Of course it is only Enlightenment people who can see the problem of religion at all. But most of us, though we can see it, cannot keep it before our minds for more than a few minutes together, however hard we try. The fact of religion is so gigantic, and at the same time so incomprehensible, that it utterly daunts and depresses the Enlightened mind. So we put it out of our thoughts.

If we are going to think at all, it will be about some smaller and less intractable mystery: of philosophy, or physics, or whatever it might be. So strong is the temptation to put religion out of our minds that no one can be blamed for surrendering to it. And yet to put aside religion is to put aside nine-tenths of human history. Jaynes is the only person I know of who, while not believing one word of religion—or one syllable, or letter—sees it in its true proportions, and steadily.

JAYNES IS ALSO completely devoid of Enlightenment superciliousness. Cicero says that, even in his time, it was impossible for two augurs to meet without smiling; yet Jaynes expounds even augury from the entrails of animals so seriously and sympathetically that both our ridicule and our disgust fade away. Jokes or sneers at the expense of religion were the stock-in-trade, in differing degrees, of Bayle, Diderot, Voltaire, Hume, and even Kant; still less can ordinary Enlightened people resist them. But Jaynes is as free from levity as he is from credulity. This is an inestimable merit. If it were objected that religion *is* ridiculous and disgusting, Jaynes's reply would be, I suppose, that schizophrenics are too; but that jokes and sneers are not a way to understanding, or a sign of understanding, in the one case any more than in the other.

Jaynes is more immune than any other thinker I know of to *the* great temptation which besets the Enlightened when they study religion. This is to let our disbelief and distaste affect the very data of our study, so that we translate a certain crucial word, or describe a certain religious practice or artefact, in some way which subtly "rationalises" religion: makes it appear less foreign to our own minds than it really is.

He mentions many cases in which this has in fact happened, especially in the translation of early writings. I will mention only one of these examples, and even that one in a hypothetical case. Suppose that we are studying a long-vanished society, and that our excavations have turned up a large statue, and also thousands of clay figurines of the same shape as the statue. We cannot believe that this statue *is* the god So-and-So, and therefore cannot imagine anyone else believing it either. Still less can we believe, or even believe that these ancient people believed, that each of the thousand figurines *is also* the god So-and-So. As a result, although it may be quite clear from all the evidence that the statue, and also each of the figurines, *was* the god So-and-So, we are almost certain to describe them as a statue and figurines *of* the god. In this way, by one tiny word, we launch an enormous error; and one which will only carry us further astray, the further we carry our researches. Yet we went wrong precisely because we were rational.

This ironic and even tragic propensity of the Enlightenment, to distort the very data of the history of religion, is so deep-rooted that there are limits to what anyone can do to guard against it. Between the religious frame of mind and the Enlightened one, there is a difference, which nothing can overcome, of perspective or dimension: like that between a boy of six and a man of sixty, or between beings of three spatial dimensions (like ourselves), and beings (supposing

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there were any) of two dimensions. Still, in many particular cases, something *can* be done to prevent this impassable gulf from being papered over by the rationalising tendency: Jaynes has shown by example that it can. Most of the Enlightened, by contrast, are not even aware that the gulf exists; and they rationalise religion, and tend to rationalise everything else in human life too, by a kind of fatal instinct. This is probably the reason for the general disorientation of the extremely Enlightened: the fact that a Bertrand Russell or an H. G. Wells, say, never understands anything of the life going on around him, or at any rate precious little compared with other people who have far less intelligence and information, but more religion.

MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE I have read, Jaynes has the ability to bring the religion-saturated past to life. No doubt this ability owes something to his freedom from superciliousness, and his immunity to rationalising; but I cannot fully explain how he does it. It is certainly not by any marked literary gifts: as a writer, Jaynes is nothing special (though he obviously sometimes thinks he is).

The opposite defects, in most Enlightened writers on religion, are obvious: they are unhistorical, abstract, monotonous. They must be so, because they bring to the study of religion only a very few categories, and those categories severely intellectual ones: theism-atheism, for example, or polytheism-monotheism. If that kind of thing is the only equipment you have, then almost all of the historical actualities of religion are bound to slip through your net and out of your sight.

But Jaynes loses sight of none of the actualities. I know of nowhere but in this book that you can meet, for example, not only with gods who are statues, or divination by sortilege, but with oracles, sibyls, and muses, all brought to startling life—yes, even muses. . . . Here are the very distortions of face and limbs which the priestess of the oracle undergoes, as she pronounces the god's response. Jaynes, like a new Pygmalion, breathes life into religion, whereas the glare of the ordinary Enlightenment mind bleaches all life and sense out of it.

As to how he does it, I can say this much: it is partly by reminding us that religion formerly suffused *everything*. Take poetry, for example. We flee from it now, as from some dull and distressful relative. An announcement that a poetry-reading is about to take place will empty a room quicker than a water-cannon. Support for poets is a minor responsibility of the Minister for the Arts. Yet the professional reciters of the Homeric poems were, to their contemporaries, precious vessels, in whom was preserved ancient knowledge of divine things. And Jaynes's theory has the beauty of implying that, in a sense, they really were so! So, in reading Jaynes, we undergo a *gestalt*-switch, and suddenly see once more, at least for a while, that poetry might matter.

The book, however, is the very reverse of a junk-yard of religious actualities. It is systematic, and every historical exhibit is put in its proper historical place. Take demons, for example. Ignorant people of the Enlightenment often imagine that belief in demons is virtually coextensive with religion. The facts are that this belief was utterly unknown in early times, and that it reached its highest point only in the ripe civilisation of the first two centuries AD—in the world of Lucian, Seneca, Petronius, and Apuleius. Jaynes's theory offers an explanation of both these facts.

Or take the matter of prayer. We usually think of prayer as an inseparable part of religion. Jaynes argues very persuasively that it is, on the contrary, a late development: a result of receding gods, and dawning consciousness. The earliest accounts we can glean of the relation of men to gods seem positively to exclude the attitude—both the physical and the mental attitude—of prayer. And prayer is, after all, an attempt to elicit a response from gods who are silent and withdrawn, "in heaven". But the *first* gods, if Jaynes is right, were precisely not in heaven but *with us*; and always on the job, too. Hypnotised people do not pester the hypnotist with petitions, or with any expressions of their will.

JAYNES HAS MADE a definite suggestion, where no one else had a single thing to offer. To explain what I mean, I quote some lines which I wrote a year before coming across his book.

> "Hegel held that animals have no religion, but as against that, Darwin (and others before him) said that, to a dog, its master is a god. If this is true, it is to the credit of canine intelligence, since the evidence for this theism is obvious and overwhelming. But where is the evidence for *our* belief that *we* are somebody's cattle? What is there, that could even have rationally first suggested this belief to our minds? Of course we might *be* somebody's cattle *and* have no evidence that we are; but that is only a trivial truth of logic. The question is, what on earth, or in the sky, or in the sea, could have given the cleverest species of animals on earth reason to believe that it is not the cleverest? That it ranks only third, or tenth (or whatever subordinate degree your religion assigns us to), in the order of intelligent beings. I have never met with a satisfactory answer to this question, or even with a promising answer. In that sense, religious belief is unintelligible to me."[1]

Hallucinated authoritative voices are at least *an* answer to the question I asked; whereas my previous reading and reflection had left me unable to suggest any answer whatever. Of course, I had been looking in all the wrong places—"on earth, or in the sky, or in the sea". It never occurred to me to look inwards, so to speak. Still, I do not now feel that I ought to have thought of Jaynes's answer myself. When Huxley first read *The Origin of Species* he exclaimed, "How extremely stupid not to have thought of that!"; and there was a good deal of justice in this self-reproach. But Jaynes's theory, though it may not be as good as Darwin's, is about ten times more original than Darwin's was.

JAYNES HAS NOT ONLY an answer, but a promising answer, to the question *why* there is religion. For a start: hallucinated authoritative voices are at least a *vera causa*. Does this seem not much? Yet is it enough on its own to put such voices miles

[1] This quotation is from my essay "Idealism: A Victorian Horror-Story", to be published later this year by Bradford Books/MIT Press, in my collection *Cole Porter and Karl Popper, and other Reputations Reconsidered*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ahead of most of the other candidates: gods themselves, visitors from outer space, "astral bodies", ghosts, Freudian god-knows-whats, and Jungian not-even-god-knows-whats? We *know* that such voices exist, and that they can control behaviour. We also know that they sometimes have momentous consequences, both for the hearer of them and for those who are only told of them by the hearer: as for example in the case of Joan of Arc.

The burial-practices of early civilised men do seem to compel the conclusion that a lately-dead king was still heard, and heard *as* king. Nor were those practices confined to burials of rulers: they sometimes extended to other social superiors, and even to ordinary parents. All of these are people who, if they "spoke" at all after death, would speak with authority.

Moreover, there would be a kind of rationality in obeying such voices. Is there anything inherently irrational in carrying out the instructions of some one you know is dead? Not at all, unless our whole practice of making and respecting a "last will and testament" is irrational—a conclusion which some of the hardier spirits of the Enlightenment did not shrink from drawing. But even if they were right, it would seem to be still more irrational to disregard the instructions of an acknowledged authority, if you are in fact still "hearing" those instructions. Border collies make wonderfully clever sheep-dogs; but one which would obey all voice-instructions for a week, through (say) a tape-recorder fitted to his head, while the shepherd relaxed in town—would not this dog be a pearl beyond price, a Border collie far more rational than even the average of his breed?

JAYNES'S THEORY OF RELIGION is already, I trust, appearing in the light of a promising one. But easily the most important point in its favour (though one not made by Jaynes) is this: that hallucinated sound is a cause of the very kind which is needed to explain religion. For consider: Religious beliefs are not arrived at by any complex intellectual process, or by anything which would ordinarily be recognised as reasoning. (If religion did require reasoning, most people would never arrive at it at all.) Quite the contrary: religious beliefs spring up spontaneously, and with irresistible force, almost everywhere in the soil of humanity. And yet, for the Enlightened, they are all false. What is required, then, in order to explain religion, is something which, first, is delusive, and second, has an immediate sensory quality, available and familiar to all.

Now, that is a very improbable combination. Immediate sensory experience, in any species, is for the most part *not* delusive. (The evolutionary reason is obvious: a species would have a poor chance of surviving if its sensory data were as likely as not to be delusive.) It is the improbability of this combination which makes it so very hard to think of *any* rational explanation of religion. But one thing which does exemplify the required combination of delusiveness with sensory immediacy is *hallucinated sound*.

Surely this is a very striking circumstance? Of course, it would not count for much if we could easily think of half-a-dozen other things which combine immediacy with delusiveness, and which might have served to suggest our first idea of gods. But can we? I have not been able to think of even one other. If other people cannot think of any either, and if it is agreed that an immediate sensory base is required to explain religion, then Jaynes's theory is running in a one-horse race.

Even if Jaynes is altogether wrong about the voices of the dead, he seems to me to have picked out the right sense-modality for religion: hearing. Contact by touch with gods has hardly ever been so much as thought of. Visual contact with gods is seldom ever claimed, at any time, and even when such claims are made, nothing in religion, or at any rate curiously little, ever seems to depend on them. But any auditory contact with a god would be likely to be a very serious matter indeed. One reason for this is pointed out by Jaynes: that hearing is peculiarly "mandatory". You can do extremely little in the way of escaping or reducing sound, and certainly nothing which corresponds to turning your head away, or closing your eyes, in the case of vision. And hallucinated sound, of course, is mandatory absolutely: you cannot even turn the volume down. That is why such sound, even in the form of mere "ringing" and the like, constitutes a terrible affliction when it is loud and constant.

But there is an even more important reason, not adverted to by Jaynes, why auditory contact with a god would be likely to be momentous: namely, that such contact would furnish the only opportunity to learn what the god commands. *Authority* is (as Jaynes insists) of the essence of religion, yet, until the invention of writing, it is hearing alone which can receive imperative messages, or any normative message at all. If you want to inform someone of something, you can do it either through his vision or his hearing: show your guest where the toilet is, or tell him where it is. But if you want to get some one to *do* something, you *must* go through his sense of hearing. Imagine the command-system in an army where all the soldiers were deaf, or all the officers were dumb. Before the invention of writing, any scene, any visual display, is normatively impotent: it cannot tell you what is to be done, or even that anything at all is to be done. You simply cannot convey to the eye the idea of "to be done". Any picture of a man doing something might mean "Do as the man in this picture does", or "If you do as this man does I will kill you", or "Don't you think this would make a nice wallpaper pattern?", or any one of a million things.

For this reason, I think that Jaynes must be right, at least in thinking that social control originally depended on the sense of hearing. That religion is *the* medium of social control among early civilised men is certain. Together, these two facts give us a strong connection between religion and hearing. And then, out of earshot, social control *via* the sense of hearing could only be hallucinatory, unless or until it was exercised through moral beliefs and a sense of responsibility: two telltale marks, Jaynes would say, of conscious life.

Religion springs up spontaneously *almost* everywhere: not everywhere. Whether a society of atheists could subsist was a question debated often and urgently during the Enlightenment. By about 1880, it had been decided in the affirmative by the "anthropologists" (as they were then beginning to be called). But the question had also by then lost the political urgency which it had had for Europe in the 18th century; for it had turned out that religionless societies, though they exist

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all right, are all extremely primitive. Whether a *civilisation* can subsist without religion would have been a better question; and it was, presumably, the one which was often really intended.

To *this* question, all the evidence points to a negative answer, and always has pointed that way. That a civilisation has never *originated*, at least, without a religion, has long been known. That civilisations decay with the decay of religion, though not so certain, is well-confirmed. All this was acknowledged even by the Enlightenment's bitterest and deepest critic of religion, David Hume, who wrote: "Look for a people entirely devoid of religion. If you find them at all, be assured that they are but a few degrees removed from brutes."[2] This is true, but it comes very oddly from Hume. In particular, it ought to have moderated the satisfaction with which he looked forward to what he called "the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of superstition".[3] (But then Hume died in 1776, thirteen years before the balloon went up.) Anyway, if it is a fact that civilisation arises, flourishes, and decays with religion, it is a fact for which Hume did not have the faintest glimmer of an explanation. But Jaynes does have an explanation: that hallucinated authoritative voices are the germ *both* of religion and of cities.

The Special Place

ON RELIGION, THEN, Jaynes's merits, all of them rare and some of them unique, are these. *1.* He sees the problem and never loses sight of it. *2.* He is entirely free from Enlightenment-superciliousness. *3.* He is immune to the temptation to rationalise religion. *4.* He brings the religious past to life. *5.* He has a definite theory of the origin of religion. *6.* His theory has much in its favour, and most importantly the fact that it postulates an *immediate sensory* origin for religion: a respect in which it seems to have no rival-theory. But the power of Jaynes's treatment of religion will, perhaps, be brought out better by the following two examples than by any list of its general merits.

Jonathan Sumption, in his valuable book *Pilgrimage* (1975), mentions that in the Middle Ages, pilgrimage sometimes became so popular, and hence so profitable to the favoured places, that competition arose among the shrines—and, as a natural consequence, advertising. It had to be given out that *your* shrine delivered more or bigger miracles than its main competitor, even if both of them should be, for example (a thing which could easily happen), shrines of Our Lady. A certain French monk who was attached to Coutances Cathedral published a book to prove that the Blessed Mary of Coutances was indeed superior to the Blessed Mary of Bayeux, and that to doubt this was not only weak-minded but dangerous:

> "He points, for example, to the fate of Vitalis, a Norman who had come to the 'insipid conclusion' that 'the Blessed Mary of Bayeux and the Blessed Mary of Coutances were one and the same person, that is, the mother of God; and that consequently the Virgin of Coutances could not possibly be more merciful or more powerful than the Virgin of Bayeux'. Vitalis accordingly refused to accompany his fellow-villagers on a mass pilgrimage to Coutances, for which the Virgin severely chastised him."

This is very good Enlightenment history, beautifully and amusingly done. But the aftertaste of it is extremely unpleasant, because it makes us despair more than ever of humankind. Vitalis, who was a monk of the 11th-12th centuries, had reasoned, for perhaps once in his life, like a rational being; and for this atrocious offence, the Virgin herself condescends to punish him! How *can* any Christian believe that the Blessed Mary of Coutances is superior to the Blessed Mary of Bayeux? But then, of course, this same mystery about identity runs through almost all religion. How can each of a thousand figurines *be* the god So-and-So? How can the Son and the Holy Ghost be distinct from one another, yet each identical with the Father? It is enough to make anyone despair; or else smile wearily and put the whole impossible business out of his mind.

But now see how one tiny touch of Jaynes loosens the log-jam. Schizophrenics, it has been found (pp. 390-91), have an odd kind of tolerance, in that they do not object to their own identity being (so to speak) scattered. For example, one of them may be convinced, say, that he is Napoleon; but if he is introduced to another who is convinced that *he* is Napoleon, what happens is—complete agreement! Each of the two stands by his own identity-claim; but each also acknowledges, with perfect equanimity, that the other person is Napoleon.

Even so amazing a fact as this does not, of course, explain how a Christian can believe that Our Lady of Coutances is superior to Our Lady of Bayeux. Indeed, it does not explain anything. But it at least irresistibly suggests that there is a fault which is common to the religious and the schizophrenic, and where this fault lies. It seems to lie in their logical faculty, and more specifically in the logic-of-identity department.

There are various logical laws of identity. One of them is the symmetry law: that if x is identical with y, then y is identical with x. Another is the transitivity law: that if x is identical with y, and y is identical with z, then x is identical with z. A third law, which follows from those two, has no standard name, but might be called the no-scatter law: if x is identical with y, and z is identical with y, then x is identical with z. It is this law which seems peculiarly likely to fall into abeyance

---

[2] *The Natural History of Religion*, in *David Hume, The Philosophical Works* (ed. Green and Grose, London, 1882), vol. 4, p. 361. Hume actually wrote, not "Look for", but "Look out for". But since the latter would now be apt to be misunderstood as "Beware", I have omitted the word "out".

[3] These words are attributed to Hume by his best friend Adam Smith, in an account which he published of Hume's last days. See vol. 3, p. 9, of *David Hume, The Philosophical Works*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

among both the religious and the schizophrenic. Could there be a particular cerebral *locus* on which compliance with this law depends, so that it is impaired if that part of the brain is imperfect, diseased, or damaged? The idea naturally suggests itself; although it does not sit very easily with the fact that any logical law must be something which is called into play everywhere, and all the time.[4]

Jaynes's theory (I hope it is unnecessary to say) is a variant of the madness theory of religion. Could it be that nearly every human being ever born has been mad? Some philosophers have, directly or by implication, ridiculed this suggestion, as being logically impossible. I think that it is not only logically possible, but the actual truth; and Jaynes's theory implies no less. Of course, a word as simple and shocking as "madness" inspires all sorts of superficial objections. But once we start to assemble the telling details, such as a fault in identity-logic which is common to the religious and the schizophrenic, we can easily afford to give up that word, while having more reason than ever to think that we had been on the right track with it all along.

MY SECOND good example of Jaynes at work is his section (pp. 321-31) on the oracles of ancient Greece. In this case, as in every other case in the history of religion, the hardest thing to do is simply to see the facts steadily, and not be blinded by Enlightenment superciliousness or rationalism. This is especially difficult in the case of the oracles, because here we have 2,000 years of those obstacles to contend with. For the oracles gradually fell silent during the last century BC and the first century AD. No one quite knows why, though many theories were canvassed at the time or soon after. (You can find some of these discussed by Plutarch, in his essay on the cessation of the oracles.)

The facts, or at any rate some of them, are these. For most of a thousand years, all Greece believed implicitly in the oracles, and, at least for the most part, accepted what the oracle said. Every question which a government found too hard, or which a group, or a private person, found too hard, was referred to an oracle, whether it was a question of fact or of policy, or a question of what was going to happen. The answer, at least in the period and at the places we know most of, was given *at once*, by a priest, or more often a priestess, who spoke for the god and was at the time "possessed" by the god: *plena deo*, "full of the god".

Cases of manipulation were not absolutely unknown, but only the most unteachable rationalist will suppose that they were typical. In the vast majority of cases, as in the very famous one which I shall mention, no one knew what the god was going to say. I cannot emphasise too strongly that *all* Greece believed in the oracles. Even at the height of the Greek Enlightenment, in the second half of the 5th century BC, the oracles retained their full authority. With Socrates, and his many disciples and companions, the Homeric gods were very largely a joke—and, they considered, a disgraceful joke at that. But their scepticism did not extend to the oracles: quite the reverse. The Socrates who has meant so much to all later generations, and who changed the course of philosophy, was not the youthful Socrates: he was merely a student of mainstream Milesian science—physics, astronomy, biology. No, the Socrates who matters is the middle-aged and the old Socrates, who was an entirely different person. This was a man who haunted public places in search of knowledge, letting the air into democratic windbags, religious maniacs from the suburbs, professional immoralists, and the taxpayers generally. He spent his later life, as Sacco and Vanzetti said they spent their earlier life, "talking to scorning men on street corners"; and he met with the same fate as they did.

Now, what was it that transformed Socrates's life? Why, this: a friend of his took it upon himself to ask the Oracle at Delphi whether there was in Greece anyone wiser than Socrates, and received the reply that there was not. News of this hit Socrates like a thunderbolt. He knew himself to be ignorant, but then he also knew that the god could not lie or be mistaken. Therefore there *had* to be some unobvious sense in which the words of the god were to be understood. And finally, though only after a long and frustrating search, Socrates hit upon his famous and seminal interpretation: that many other people thought they knew something, but did not, while he alone knew that he knew nothing. So the god had spoken truly, after all!

These facts are as certain as anything in all antiquity: they are drawn from Socrates's speech when on trial for his life, as recounted by his disciple Plato shortly after the trial took place. Judge from them the depth of Socrates's trust in the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi; and, *a fortiori*, the authority which the oracles possessed among people who were not, as he was, at the forefront of the Enlightenment. And, from the insuperable difficulty which *we* have in taking these facts seriously, judge how disabling Enlightenment attitudes are. . . .

IN THE 5TH CENTURY, then, the oracles retained the position in Greek life which they had possessed for the two preceding centuries. Their overall history, as Jaynes relates it, was in outline as follows.

At first there is just a certain *place*, usually distinguished by striking natural features, but with no people at all attached to it. Anyone who goes there can "hear" the god. (One of these "direct" oracles survived to a very late date.) Then there is a stage in which a priest or priestess is always present, but not "possessed" by the god: they are merely people who can "hear" the god when others cannot. Later again come the "classic" priests and priestesses, they of the distorted mouths and limbs, in some mental state characterised by extreme diminution of consciousness, and induced by elaborate preparations. Later still, a second class of persons appears: interpreters, not themselves possessed, but needed in order to explain the increasingly difficult utterances of the possessed. Then the answers gradually become impossible for anyone to make head or tail of; and finally no sound at all can be elicited, and the place becomes deserted.

[4] I cannot forbear mentioning the following curious fact. I have elsewhere shown, in something which was written well before I had heard of Jaynes, that this very same law of identity is characteristically in abeyance among *another* class of persons: namely, those philosophers who are, in the technical sense of the word, idealists. Philosophical idealism has always, of course, been an offspring of religion, and has even been generally recognised as such.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is, I think, only the first third of this sequence which might be seriously wrong: the second two-thirds of it seem to be pretty much agreed on by all authorities. Naturally, I do not know whether Jaynes is right about the first third. But if he is right, and even if he is right only about the very first stage—that is, if the oracles were all at first *direct* ones—then his theory of religion is powerfully confirmed.

For consider. Originally the god can be heard only at special places; then only by special people even there; then by even those people only when they are in a special and induced state; then only with the help of a second class of specialists to interpret what is said; and finally even all these piled-up specialisms are not enough. If this is indeed the history of the oracles, it scarcely admits of any other explanation than Jaynes's one: namely, that earlier still, *everyone* had been able to hear a divine voice *anywhere*, and that this capacity became progressively rarer, and progressively harder to exercise even by those who still possessed it.

Restoring the Oracles

JAYNES WOULD HAVE the whole of religion hang by the single slender thread of hallucinated voices. I do not believe that it can support so great a weight. The experience of hallucinating a voice seems, somehow, too special; and also too rare, even where, by the theory, it ought to be still rather common. Jaynes acknowledges that even those people who in childhood had an "invisible playmate" did not in general hallucinate the speech of the invisible one. Most people, as far as I know, never in their lives hallucinate a voice; certainly I never have. The nearest I have come to it is that once, for a few days after a beloved dog died, I "heard" around the place the familiar clinking of the metal parts of her collar.

There are whole huge parts or aspects of religion which do not figure at all in Jaynes's theory. One is what I do not shrink from calling the Velikovskian-astronomical part: for I am enough of an admirer of the late Immanuel Velikovsky to agree with him that the best explanation of the belief in planetary "wars in heaven", of the fear of comets, etc., is—wars in heaven. But here, of course, Jaynes would say in his own defence that planetary gods, being in heaven, must be a *late* religious development. And indeed it must be admitted that to mistake what we call Mars and Venus for gods would seem to presuppose a degree of scientific knowledge, or at least of disinterested curiosity, which is not easily ascribed to a very early stage of human history.

Then, even more importantly, there is nothing at all in Jaynes's theory about the "Anaximandrian" or developmental aspect of religion. I have in mind Anaximander's justly famous observation, that the helplessness of the young is both more extreme and more prolonged in humans than in any other animal: a fact of which the implications are still unexhausted, despite the 2,600 years since it was first pointed out. Surely this fact must have *something* rather important to do with religion; although, no doubt, not merely infantile life, but intra-uterine life, needs to be taken into account. If we absolutely had to choose between an historical or once-and-for-all explanation of religion, such as Jaynes's, and an explanation of it solely in terms of the biological development of every individual, Jaynes's way would be, in my opinion, the right way to go. But it is obvious enough that we do not *have* to make such a choice: there is nothing to stop a theory of religion being mainly historical but partly developmental. (In fairness I must add that, somewhere in this book, Jaynes refers to another book which he was then preparing, on the development of consciousness in children; but I do not know whether that book ever appeared.)

THOSE ARE two very large gaps in any theory of religion. But I must say that, looking over what I have written here, my strongest impression is, not of how much Jaynes has left out, but of how little I have managed to convey of what he put in. If you think of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* played on a tin whistle, and then think of it played and sung properly, you will have a fair idea of the difference between my account of Jaynes on religion, and Jaynes on religion.

The trouble is that nothing I could write would ever have more than the ordinary Enlightenment merits of being sane, clear, and consequential. Jaynes, by contrast, though an Enlightenment man, has tapped such deep and long-forgotten sources, and given them such a flood of utterance, that, having done so, he is no longer an ordinary Enlightenment man like the rest of us.

He hardly could be. For he has, in a manner, restored the oracles after their long cessation: a work of Hercules, which could not possibly have been performed by the intellect alone, or be limited in its effects to the intellect alone.

With a Forked Tongue

Die Schornsteine rauchten
Die Vögel verstummten
Zur Asche wurden
Die Märchenwälder

The chimneys smoked,
The birds fell silent,
The myths of the forest
Turned to ash.

Gerda Mayer

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTES & TOPICS

Beyond the Veil

By Dan Pinck

ACCORDING to Bob Woodward, the assistant managing editor for the investigative staff of *The Washington Post* and a Pulitzer Prize winner for his Watergate exposures, the power élite in Washington has a limited vocabulary consisting largely of obscenities—or perhaps Woodward hears four-letter words more often than he hears others. There is a veil over his latest book, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987*.[1] Indeed, his reporting technique suggests that he wasn't present when the conversations he records took place and that his version of them relies heavily on his own limited vocabulary. Woodward reports episodes at which he couldn't possibly have been present. He notes at the beginning that he gained his knowledge from more than 250 undisclosed sources, most of whom express their most serious thoughts in atrocious obscenities. His language, and that of others, is so bad and so repetitive that one wonders how he knows what he claims to know.

The book follows, chronologically from beginning to end, the late William J. Casey's history and involvement with the Central Intelligence Agency and the Iran-Contra activities. The CIA is the United States's best-known and most-exposed intelligence agency. Casey was the Director of Central Intelligence from 1981 to 1987; he was, we may be certain, the control of the uncontrollable Lt. Col. Oliver North, who admits to deceiving the US Congress and many representatives of high government agencies. Anyone who displayed his flair for incompetence as an international trader would have been summarily fired before he became a national, off-the-shelf phenomenon.

Although the following conversations are taken out of context, they do illuminate what the context of *Veil* is. Parental guidance is suggested before reading these statements of the power élite:

> "Senator William Cohen: 'Barry, what the fuck is this?'
> Senator Barry Goldwater: '. . . find out what the fuck's going on. . . . I've pulled his nuts out of the fire often enough.'
> William J. Casey: 'He's the last fucker that will get that job.'
> Prince Bandar (Saudi Ambassador): 'Tell him to go fuck himself.'
> Secretary of State George Shultz: 'Why don't we give him AIDS?'
> CIA official Clair George: 'I don't know what the fuck to do. . . . This is so fucking demoralizing! When Goldwater said he was pissed off, he carried the whole Senate.'
> L. Anthony Motley (US Ambassador): 'McMahon had somehow caught Casey sucking cock!' . . ."

And so on.

After separate piles of f-words, a-words, m-words, c-words, and s-words have been placed in critical frames of reference, it's worth a turn to learn how Woodward further uses anonymous reporting from undisclosed sources. His verisimilar reporting suggests an intimacy on his part that demands verification. "The flames were flickering in the Oval Office fireplace. . . ." It is a homey description; but how does Woodward know this if he wasn't in the President's office? Did he have a mole inside the White House reporting on the state of the fireplace that day? Who knows? For an answer, we must depend on one of the 250 undisclosed sources. Did President Reagan report this to Woodward? I doubt it; even Reagan's literary taste is higher than this epiphany of Woodward's: "The President's eyes flashed and his jaw set." Ouch. If we can renounce our critical faculties, we might believe that we are there, witnessing the jaw setting.

Woodward *sleuths* (he uses the noun *source* as a verb, so I'll adopt his misuse of language) into bedrooms, offices and limousines.

> "The alarm woke the Director of Central Intelligence Stansfield Turner. He hated getting up in the morning, and he had set the alarm for the last possible minute—7 a.m.—this Thursday, November 20, 1980. . . . After a shower, Turner dressed and sat down to read for a few minutes. He picked up the weekly Christian Science lesson. If he didn't pause now, there would be no other opportunity during the day. He liked to think that his was the intellectual branch of Christianity—the mind and the spirit over all else. . . . At the breakfast table, he drank juice and hot water with lemon. Christian Science meant no stimulants, no coffee. Turner didn't even like the taste of coffee ice cream."

How did Woodward discover this intimate information; was Woodward hiding in Turner's bedroom that particular morning? Was Turner another mole of Woodward's, spying on himself? Who knows?

A CURSORY, freeze-frame look at the index of the book reveals a 30-page cornucopia of well-known persons. There are nineteen items listed under Turner, Stansfield—Casey's predecessor at the CIA. The index is a Washington name-dropper's reference of involvement and research; yet there is no substantial evidence in the book to confirm the involvement of anyone. Roger Rabbit is not listed; but he may have been lurking about, taking notes. President George Bush, who was the Director of the CIA from 1976 to early 1977, has

[1] *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987*. By BOB WOODWARD. Simon & Schuster, $21.95, £14.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fifteen references in the index. Reagan told Bush, "Don't trust the CIA". This, it turns out, was excellent advice. Woodward lists himself in the index, with fifteen items. All of them need corroboration; yet there is none. The book's index is neither a map nor a guide; it may offer Woodward, Bob plausible deniability to those who do not care to have the evidence confirmed and who care not a whit about the truth.

Woodward is intensely interested in interiors, clothing, fireplaces, and the like. When he admits to being present at a meeting, we might be willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. When CIA Deputy Director Max Hugel visits the boardroom on the eighth floor of *The Washington Post*, Woodward reports: "Hugel, five foot five, wore a conservative chocolate-brown pinstriped suit, a plain tie and a shirt with small light, subdued dots. His smile was warm." Now there's an example of great investigative reporting. Woodward, Bob, reports that he "had more than four dozen interviews or substantive discussions with Casey from 1983 to 1987". Whether the following observation is part of an interview or a substantive discussion, we don't know. "The Director wore a well-tailored conservative blue suit. His shirt was perfectly pressed, the collar stiff and the tie clearly expensive." Subsequently, at another interview or substantive discussion, Woodward describes Casey's reaction to a question: "He stared hard, his dentures full of peanuts."

Woodward attempts to get off the hook in a prefatory admonition at the beginning of his book: "The use of dialogue in meetings or conversations comes from at least one participant or written memos or contemporaneous notes." It is hard to believe that. His accounts indicate an appalling sameness in the vulgar and obscene language. There is no controlling judgment in *Veil*. Even the most ravening of reporters would be aghast at Woodward's descriptions. We learn nothing about the Iran-Contra affair; but we do learn just how impoverished Woodward's writing is. I don't believe many officials in Washington are deep thinkers, but I know that their swearing is more imaginative than that displayed in *Veil*. Recombinant minglings of fiction and fact have become a new form of writing contemporary history. Accuracy is irrelevant. Woodward has produced a cartoon slice of history, no more and a lot less, and he demonstrates this art form in pristine purity.

If the US Government had an Official Secrets Act, it would be in hot pursuit of Bob Woodward and his 250 undisclosed sources. The CIA often goes to court to prevent former agents from publishing any material critical of the Agency and its activities. The mounting plethora of books by spies and ex-spies suggests the impossibility of maintaining secret information. *Spycatcher*,[2] in my opinion as poorly written as *Veil*, is the object of the British Government's Official Secrets Act and its new Bill. The result of Government intervention has been to make a bestseller out of a mediocre book. For the British Government to mount a prosecution over the "foreign" leak of information in *Spycatcher*, it would have to prove that it harmed the interests of the United Kingdom abroad. This should not be too difficult; nor should it be difficult to show that *Veil* harms the American Government abroad. My evidence might not stand in a court of law, but it is damning evidence. *Veil* harms the United States because the writing is so abominable: readers in other nations will believe that Americans can neither read with critical intelligence (it has been a bestseller in the United States) nor write with any skill and appreciation of the English language. The same applies to *Spycatcher*.

RESEARCH CONSULTANTS
Leading academics
RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
Experienced honours graduates
TRANSLATORS
Qualified, most European languages
ARCHIVISTS
Editing and indexing by word processor

Research Assistance Routledge Associates
4 Lauriston Road, London SW19 4TQ
Phone 01-947 9375

ON BOTH SIDES of the Atlantic, there is an insatiable interest in books about Intelligence operations and behind-the-lines spying. The interest is just as great in books that reveal moles within our nations' Intelligence agencies as it is in our agents in the USSR's *KGB*. The more dense and unfathomable the action or plot, the greater the interest. OSS, SOS, CIA, NSA, SOE, SAS, MI6, DIA, NFIB, NID, SNIE, COIC, MI5, NEC, KGB, GRU, Operation Silver, "C", DCI, NSC, OCI, 5G44, PFIAB, ChiNat, CIG, CHAOS, CORDS, Q-2, OSO, ONE, UVO, ONI, CIG, SIS, TSS, Project Artichoke, BNDD, COMOR, ISOS, EM-D, ACAS, PRO, JIC, SGM, "K", RSS, ARCOS, Section IX, "Quex", DO, INR, NSDD, SCI, SIGINT, GCHQ, 14K Triad, CSO, SCF, FCO, DPP, SD, F Section, DI5, Mossad, R5, and a thousand more of the alphabets of alleged covert and overt Intelligence operations feed hundreds of books—fact and fiction—about secret derring-do at home and abroad. Moles and super-moles, double-agents and triple-agents, dour men and adventurous women are mixed in stories so complex and convoluted that you seldom know who is spying on whom, who represents reality and who unreality. And after you have become immersed in their machinations you forget to ask yourself why. Smiley's Registry itself passes for a model of rational simplicity after delving into the mindless literature of spying. The subject of truth is irrelevant; entertainment is the key to the cryptography of our continuing interest.

Veil is an unwittingly amateurish attempt to unravel the monstrously eccentric skeins of leadership in the White House and the Central Intelligence Agency during the Iran-Contra affair. Motivated primarily by an itch to stop Communism from expanding in South and Central America (recall that the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, advocated supporting the Argentine Government and not Britain during the Falklands War), the major players in Iran-Contra

[2] Peter Wright, *Spycatcher* (Heinemann, Australia, 1987).

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

believed that the diversion of a few million dollars from the sale of missiles to Iran to the so-called freedom-fighters in Nicaragua would significantly help to keep Communisim from spreading in this hemisphere. Ambassador Kirkpatrick believed that a Communist government would take over Argentina if the British won the Falklands. From this balderdash, it easily follows that President Reagan and his retinue may have tried to plot the overthrow of the Sandinistas.

As in a Jacobean pageant, the characters pass in review during Iran-Contra. Beginning with Ronald Reagan, they read like characters in novels by Eric Ambler and Dashiell Hammett: Adnan Khashoggi, Manucher Ghorbanifar, Roy Furmark, Oliver North, Prince Bandar, Husein Mussabi, John Poindexter, Robert McFarlane, John Shaheen, Eugene Hasenfus, Angelo Codevilla, Michael Ledeen, Richard Secord, Constantine Menges, Eden Pastore, Adolfo Calero, David Kimche—each is unveiled in Woodward's insider prose and each is uncovered (or covered) in his role.

Who does know? Woodward knows: he lets the tape run, providing us with reels of unconfirmed data which we are supposed to believe. We believe at our peril. It will take years of undercover work by reputable historians to discover the germane factors in the creation of Iran-Contra. Maybe the

School for Spy-Writing

AN AMERICAN COMMENTATOR *has recently laid down ground rules for fellow journalists who want to report on sex scandals involving politicians. The present spate of spy books suggests that some ground rules may also come in handy in this field of journalistic activity.*

1. OUR BUDDING AUTHOR **must first select an upper-class Briton formerly connected with MI5 or MI6 (hereinafter to be referred to as "the victim"). To avoid libel actions, the victim must be dead. A British victim is highly desirable because of the American market. American cognoscenti firmly believe that only upper-class Britons are both sex-deviants and dedicated Marxists; it is unwise to trifle with these beliefs. There have been, of course, many more American spies; but most of these have been of humble origin and have worked for money (like the rest of us). They tend also to have foreign names, which means (for Anglo-Saxons) that they were incapable of loyalty and are therefore uninteresting as traitors.**

2. HAVING CHOSEN *his victim, our author needs an "inside" source, who once had some connection with MI5 or MI6. It is best to look for someone who retired on a very small pension or was only awarded the MBE after 40 years of devoted service. If it transpires that most of these are already under contract, it is usually safe to build up the importance of a janitor or liftman as a source; indeed, the gossip provided by the humbler sources sometimes turns out to be more highly spiced. A semi-literate source is also less likely to succumb to the temptation to write memoirs before emigrating.*

3. AT THIS STAGE **it is essential to visit Washington to find out what FBI documents about the British spy scene have been released under the Freedom of Information Act. Some of the British names in these documents will have been blacked out; but this is no real obstacle. In fact it can prove helpful, as it allows our author to substitute names that fit his conspiracy theory. For this reason he would be well advised, in selecting his victim, to eschew unusually long names, such as Throckmorton or Cholmondeley, despite their having the right aristocratic overtones.**

4. IF OUR AUTHOR *finds the FBI archives disappointing, or examining microfilm gives him a crick in the neck, he will find bars in Washington where, for the price of a few drinks, friendly ex-agents of the FBI will be glad to explain in detail how degenerate upper-class Briton's betrayed honest, native-born Americans. It is best to pick FBI ex-agents of advanced years; those trained by Edgar Hoover were imbued with hostile attitudes towards all Britons, but especially those who worked for MI5 and MI6.*

5. IN THE COURSE **of these activities, our author should begin to describe himself as an historian. To improve this "cover", he should hire an expert to supply an index for his book, and add some notes. These latter need not give much trouble; it is safe to insert a few references to the Public Record Office—nobody will check them. Unsupported speculations can be attributed to "private sources", or to some earlier hack who worked similar territory.**

6. THE NEXT STAGE *is the trickiest: to secure maximum publicity, it is desirable to induce some expression of disquiet or disapproval on the part of the government, without actually provoking an injunction against the publisher of the book. Use of the D-Notice procedure is recommended for this purpose. As it is not operated very rigorously, there is a risk that no objection to the text will be raised and no outcry will be generated. To avoid this set-back, it may be necessary to go over the top—by speculating, for example, that at a given period the Director-General of one of the Secret Services and all but one of his senior Directors were working for the KGB. If this seems exaggerated, our author can always cite the classic case of the Communist Party cell in the States which was so deeply penetrated by the FBI that in the end all but one of its members proved to be under-cover agents of the FBI.*

7. FINALLY, **a word about handling fellow media men. The first essential is to insist that our new author, who has now graduated as an historian, is not interested in making money, or even in paying off old scores, but is acting solely in the public interest with one or more of the following objectives:** *a)* **to purge the Secret Services (despite the fact that the victim and his dubious colleagues have been dead for many years);** *b)* **to bring about the reform of the Official Secrets Act (although, if it were repealed,** *real* **historians would enter the field);** *c)* **to bring down the government, or at least provoke a debate in Parliament and so maximise publicity.**

Secondly, our author must stress that he has revealed in this first volume only "the tip of the iceberg", implying that he knows more suspects than he has named. This leaves the way open for another book, which can be suitably entitled *Son of Spook, More Molehills*, **or** *Double Double-Agent Trouble*.

Robert Cecil

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

excuses for the amateurishness of the operation can be delineated only in four-letter words.

The British Government would impound the book and the author if *Veil* had been written by a British reporter about covert operations undertaken by British agencies. The mere reporting of what the head of Intelligence liked to drink for breakfast would be punishable; and the person who may have given the writer this information—even the head of Intelligence—would be equally guilty. Of course, Whitehall would have to show that the divulging of such information could be useful to an enemy. This might be hard to do, although the writer could be accused of violating the Official Secrets Act. In the United States, however, anything goes.

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, I was invited to a two-day meeting of old CENSORED who had been active in secret intelligence work since World War II. The then head of the Central Intelligence Agency, William J. Casey, and two former directors, William E. Colby and Richard Helms, as well as a former Deputy Director, Ray Cline, were among the 80 or so guests who vied with one another in telling the most appropriate and sometimes outlandish tales of adventure 30 and 40 years ago. The participants, so we were advised in our invitation, were all members of the old-boy network of Intelligence operatives. Much to my surprise and dismay, I recognised a journalist who had built a lucrative career exposing wrongdoing in Washington, and who had never been a member of this old-boy network; the man was Bob Woodward. His presence mystified me. I decided to try to find out what he was doing. Woodward was talking to Colby. I walked over to them and listened. They were talking about the new office building at the CIA's headquarters in Langley, Virginia; then they talked about Nathan Hale's statue outside the Director's office. (Nathan Hale said, the moment before he was hanged, "Give me liberty or give me death".) When their conversation lulled, I said, "Woodward, what are you doing here?" He said, without looking directly at me, "I'm writing a biography of Bill Casey".

It was odd that Casey allowed Woodward to write about him. I couldn't fathom Casey's reasoning and I didn't try. It was mysterious; but then many things the CIA do are mysterious. After the publication of *Veil*, I surmised that Casey had many ulterior motives, chief among them the desire to perplex the Russians. There is so much unclassified information about clandestine operations and technical innovations that the Russians must feel they have to analyse all of it. There must be 10,000 Russians reading information about American covert operations and trying to make useful interpretations. It's an impossible task in the United States; it's got to be impossible for the Russians. With more and more books, we might overload their system. Several former directors of the CIA have written books. Are there any secrets? Is everyone in the CIA? If the United States had an Official Secrets Act, then the entire CIA would be impounded.

My assumption is that the CIA is an infertile cover for Intelligence operations and that the actual directors of American Intelligence are located in the kitchens of a tandoori in Ealing and a Chinese restaurant in San Francisco.

Burke's Ireland

By Max Beloff

IT CAN NEVER be useless to read Edmund Burke. In range of sympathies and in the capacity to place political questions of the moment within the perspective of centuries and of continents, he remains the master. And in an age when political debate has cheapened into the patter of the admen, it is good to be reminded of the sonorities of which the English language was capable a mere 200 years ago. Ireland's problems are, alas, always with us. Yet I am a little puzzled by the present republication of Burke's comments upon them.[1]

As one is reminded by Conor Cruise O'Brien, in an introduction done with his usual verve, this collection has not been made with a view to the present-day reader. It is a reprint of a collection of Burke's public writings, with a few private letters on the same topics, made by Matthew Arnold in connection with the renewed attention paid to Irish questions at the time of the Home Rule controversy in 1881. It may be that readers at that time, 100 years closer to the events, were more familiar with them—could place every allusion of Burke's to some particular occasion, and identify the statesmen and others to whom he rarely gives an actual name. It is certain that they would have found it easier to take aboard the classical quotations which were then part and parcel of House of Commons debates. If this material needed to be called to our attention in popular form—Burke scholars are otherwise provided for—it would surely have been desirable to provide enough annotation to help understand the text. It would not have been a vast effort, and it would have made the volume more acceptable.

Furthermore, as Conor Cruise O'Brien makes clear, the Irish affairs which were the objects of Burke's concern are not those of today, though they continue to have their repercussions on what has now become both sides of the border in a (then unthinkable) partitioned country. In dealing with Ireland, as with other political issues, Conor Cruise O'Brien makes much of the dividing line brought about in Burke's thinking by the French Revolution. Indeed, his one suggestion in dealing with Matthew Arnold's editing is to suggest that a letter written in this later phase should be read in its chronological place and not where Arnold put it. Before 1782, Burke was chiefly concerned to plead for the abolition of the worst aspects of the penal laws and to try to bring about, if not an equality for the majority Roman Catholic community, then

[1] *Irish Affairs*. By EDMUND BURKE. Edited by MATTHEW ARNOLD, with a new introduction by CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN. The Cresset Library (Hutchinson), £6.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at least a situation which would not prevent them from enjoying tolerable conditions for earning their livelihood and for education in the tenets of their faith.

When he returned to the affairs of Ireland in 1792, after this absorption in Indian affairs through the Warren Hastings trial, the situation had changed. Ireland had achieved economic equality with Britain, advocacy of which had cost Burke the support of his electors at Bristol; and the Irish Parliament—Grattan's Parliament—had been freed from Westminster's control. Some derogations from the worst of the discrimination against Catholics had been made. But the Irish Parliament was itself a vehicle for the preservation of "the Protestant ascendancy" (a phrase which came into use at that time and which meant not just Protestants, but members of the established Anglican Church).

It was among Protestant dissenters—ancestors of Dr Ian Paisley's "loyalists"—that anti-English sentiment was most powerful and treasonable activities most prevalent. Burke feared the influence of "Jacobinism" upon this combustible matter. His main purpose in his last years of life was to argue that, if the Catholics were enfranchised, they would be deaf to the appeals of the "United Irishmen" and could be made into the most loyal of the King's subjects. Jacobinism, as propagated in Europe by the armies of the Revolution and Napoleon Bonaparte, was the enemy of all religion: all four main elements in the religion of the British Isles—Anglicanism, Scottish Presbyterianism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestant dissent—had an equal interest in resisting it. But that demanded decent equality of treatment. As we know—if Latin is still permitted—*dis aliter visum* (the powers that be saw things differently).

Subsequent history changed the issues at stake beyond recall. Nor can it be said that Ulster, even in the Stormont period, renewed the old situation. The differences are greater than the similarities.

All this does not matter, says Conor Cruise O'Brien. Burke is purveying not just comments on the passing scene, but truths about politics or suggestions about politics that set one thinking; and thinking is always good for one. I am inclined to agree. On looking round our world, one can see many countries whose governments might learn from Burke. None seems very willing to do so.

I Am Old

I am old
And it's a new world now, they say
Of computer games
And journeys to Betelgeuse
And Canopus Major
If such places exist

The world economy is getting better
While daily everything
That made life tolerable
Is getting worse

The world's computers have proved
That friendship, love, community,
Creation are all illusions
And nothing but. . . .

But . . .
It would be nice
To sit by an open hearth
And have a drink
With a friend
And smoke a pipe
It would be nice to be in love
Without the obligation of writing letters
Or otherwise expressing it

It would be nice
To have the old world back

Patrick Gillen

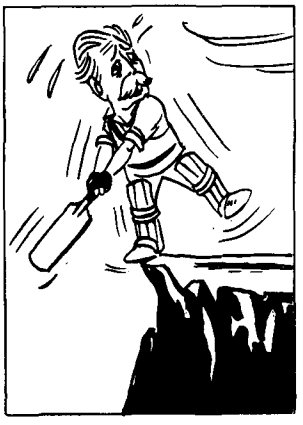
PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Special Book Section

History & Biography

Practitioner of Politics

The Younger Harold—By KENNETH MINOGUE



DID HAROLD MACMILLAN deliberately manoeuvre Anthony Eden out of office during the Suez Crisis? That he did has been argued in depth by David Carlton,[1] and Alistair Horne discusses the idea in Volume I of his enthralling biography of Macmillan.[2] Horne gives it little credence, relying on Lord Carrington's "Rubbish!", and on a denial by Eden's widow, whose testimony has the force of an admission by a hostile witness. Clarissa Eden's verdict, however, is that of someone in no real position to judge. Nor would it have been easy for anyone in the Eden camp to stand against the kind of sentiment expressed by a recent correspondent to the *Sunday Telegraph*:

> "To suggest that a man with such a profound sense of patriotism as Harold Macmillan would have deliberately endangered the good name of the country for personal advantage is foolishly insulting and grossly defamatory of the dead."[3]

As the single explanation of Macmillan's conduct, indeed, the thesis won't wash. Macmillan was certainly patriotic and public-spirited, and would only have wished to do his best for the country. But politicians act out of single motives no more than anyone else, and it would be astonishing if he had not come to be aware during the drama of Suez that fortune was moving in interesting ways.

Certainly he made some odd misjudgments: about Eisenhower's likely response to British military action in the Middle East, for example, and about what steps might be taken to diminish Britain's economic vulnerability to pressure through the International Monetary Fund. It is not as if such precautions would have required uncommon prescience. The French took them. Further, there now appears to be evidence that the figures Macmillan presented to the Cabinet on the decisive meeting of 6 November 1956 reported a loss of gold and dollar reserves about double the true figure.

No such evidence, of course, is decisive either way. Figures are often revised in the light of later information. It might be that Macmillan had come to recognise that military occupation of the Canal would solve nothing, and judged that an economic argument would persuade the Cabinet more efficiently than arguments about likely military and political outcomes—speculations whose persuasive force had by then been exhausted. Nevertheless, the suspicion of deviousness at some level in Macmillan's behaviour cannot easily be dispelled. Nor is such suspicion absent from other episodes in his career.

Horne's *Macmillan 1894-1956* is very largely the world through Macmillan's eyes, but this is no bar to its revealing a great deal of fascinating material about the political education of one of the most successful Prime Ministers of the century, one remembered these days largely with affectionate regard. It seems clear that he was early set on the course of political advancement by his strong-willed American mother whose ambition for him knew no bounds. From the beginning to end, he steered his course with admirable *virtu*. Nothing distracted him, not even the fact that for the best part of two decades he was becalmed, a slightly absurd political figure on the periphery of ruling circles. All the time, he can be observed patiently working away at the skill of politics.

ALL ACCOUNTS AGREE that the early Macmillan was an idealist, where "idealism" means a strong disposition towards employing the regulatory power of government to relieve the sufferings of the poor and the unemployed. But for the accident of milieu, he would have fitted quite snugly on the Liberal or even Labour benches in the Commons. Those he admired in his early career included Lloyd George and Oswald Mosley,

---

[1] A version of this argument was presented in the *Sunday Telegraph* of 9 October 1988, and is developed in *Britain and the Suez Crisis* (Blackwell, 1988).

[2] *Macmillan: The Making of a Prime Minister 1894-1956*. Volume I of the Official Biography. By ALISTAIR HORNE. Macmillan London, £16.95.

[3] Roger Gray, QC, *Sunday Telegraph*, 15 January 1989.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and part of their appeal lay in what they could teach him about the skill of politics.

Lloyd George, for example, gave him good advice on not packing too many ideas into a speech, but also features in Horne's account as virtually instructing him on the place of flattery in politics. Macmillan had made a speech in which he had attacked Lloyd George, and expected that this would be resented. He was totally disarmed when Lloyd George said to him:

> "I saw very well what you were doing the other day. You were trying to disguise your revolt against your Tory front bench by a side-attack on me. It is an old trick, and I have done it many times. But you are a born rebel."

Who could resist it? Meanwhile, across on the other side of the House, Mannie Shinwell was deciding that Macmillan was compassionate, and the magnetic figure of Oswald Mosley was sharing some of Macmillan's own radical ideas. Radicalism, in this context, means a taste for jumping into society with both feet and making it work. In the spring of 1927, Macmillan compiled a booklet called *Industry and the State*, in which he argued that collective bargaining should be given statutory authority. His friend Robert Boothby, with whom he was soon to be linked in a lifelong triangle involving Lady Dorothy Macmillan, was among these radicals impatiently seeking to improve the social world. They were known as the YMCA. It would be astonishing had Macmillan not felt some force of attraction from the meteorite Mosley.

In May 1930, Macmillan floated towards the edge of acceptable Conservative opinion (as he was later to do in opposing Quintin Hogg's parliamentary candidature in Oxford in 1938) by writing a letter to *The Times* commending Mosley for resigning as a junior minister in the MacDonald Government. Mosley was taken to be sticking to his pledge to reduce unemployment, an issue on which Macmillan criticised his own party. He suggested that Mosley had "broken the rules of the political game" by saying what he meant and meaning what he said. If these were indeed the rules, Macmillan suggested, the game was not worth playing.

An immediate response came from the young R. A. Butler and three other MPs:

> "When a player starts complaining that 'it's hardly worth bothering to play' the game at all, it is usually the player and not the game who is at fault. It is then usually advisable for the player to seek a new field for his recreation, and a pastime more suited to his talents."

Horne comments that Harold Macmillan at this point came close to accepting Butler's caustic advice.

Unlike many another politician in choppy waters, Macmillan had, in publishing, another world to which he could retreat. Not even having lost his seat in the House of Commons, however, could divert him from his chosen course. Yet it seemed at that juncture highly unlikely that he would achieve much success. Horne, talking about love, strikingly illuminates these realities in a contrast with Boothby which applies no less to politics:

transaction

PASSAGE TO A HUMAN WORLD
THE DYNAMICS OF CREATING GLOBAL WEALTH
Max Singer
With a foreword by Irving Kristol

Responding to the Club of Rome's *Limit to Growth* and its successors, Singer, using readily accessible statistics and well-understood facts, gives the non-technical reader a way to understand why the doomsayers are wrong. The dominant characteristic of the modern era, argues the author, is going almost completely unrecognized: the world's passage, in the few centuries surrounding our own, from poverty to wealth.
"Singer convincingly demonstrates that economic growth is the central reality of the modern era . . . ." –Peter Brimelow
$16.95 **0-88738-259-2 (paper)** **£11.95**

LEGITIMACY IN THE MODERN STATE
John H. Schaar

In this analysis of the concept of authority in Western Society, the author proposes that legitimate authority is declining in the modern state. Law and order, Schaar argues, is the basic political issue of our time–one that conservatives have understood with greater clarity than their liberal adversaries.
$19.95 **0-88738-772-1 (paper)** **£12.95**

LEFTWARD JOURNEY
THE EDUCATION OF VIETNAMESE STUDENTS IN FRANCE
Scott McConnell

Leftward Journey records the birth of "Third World" politics in the Parisian Left Bank and shows how its first echos fed into allegiance to Communism. The book vividly portrays the French Communist part's superior energy and sense of direction during the thirties and shows how they outdid their socialist and bourgeois rivals in winning Vietnamese recruits.
$34.95 **0-88738-238-X(cloth)** **£24.95**

POLITICAL CORRUPTION
A HANDBOOK
Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Michael Johnston, Victor LeVine, editors

Recognition that political corruption constitutes a valid and challenging subject for political and social scientists is now widely accepted, in part because changes in political climates and conditions of competition have made corruption more visible. Instead of seeing corruption as a phenomenon primarily characteristic of developing countries, the contributors look closely at Western European countries, the United States, and the leading communist systems.
$39.95 **0-88738-163-4 (cloth)** **£29.50**

TRANSACTION PUBLISHERS
Rutgers-
The State University
New Brunswick, N.J.
08903 U.S.A.

The Forley Building
Headley Road East
Woodley
Reading RG5 4DY
U.K.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> "Six years younger than Harold, one of his closest friends and vital political allies, Boothby possessed a strikingly attractive personality: he was moreover considered the coming man. Brilliant, a remarkable speaker, eccentric, ahead of his time, many saw him as a potential prime minister. The antithesis of his friend Harold Macmillan, he affected total self-assurance; quoting a journalist who had praised him as being 'always ahead of his time, and always right', Boothby declared, 'From this conclusion I cannot dissent.' Extremely good-looking, he dressed with careless raffishness, in complete contrast to Macmillan with his unstylish clothes, gold-rimmed glasses, unappealing bushy moustache and toothily diffident half-smile."

It was hare and tortoise, then. While the hare was striking postures round the country, the tortoise was picking up things about the nature of the game. He watched Oswald Mosley with fascination, but was much too canny to be dragged along in his wake. On a train to Oxford, he ran into Harold Nicolson and told him that the New Party's moment would come in about five years. For the moment, Macmillan said, he could do the most good staying where he was. By that time, of course, Mosley's posturing had taken him irredeemably beyond the margins of British politics, and Macmillan commented in retrospect:

> "Had he waited, he might have been supreme. He struck too soon, and fell forever. In politics, as in many other things, the essence of the game is timing."

As an epitaph, these words would have fitted nearly all of those who turned out to be Macmillan's rivals. But already he had had the benefit of some absolutely mainstream advice from, of all people, the widow of Herbert Asquith. She warned him not only against Mosley, but also against "Winston or any other false god". Of Mosley she said that he "has played the fool to a degree I never thought possible as he is very clever—but not quite as remarkable as he thinks he is". On Churchill she was no less brutal:

> "I shd avoid Winston, he has no political insight or glimmer of gratitude or loyalty. Try and get together all the young ones. Men who coin phrases to cover their changing convictions are no good? I have seen too many of them in politics."

She had come close to defining the very essence of the Conservative tradition, and Macmillan was acutely aware of the moral and political nuances to which she referred. Quite what use would be made of this advice by the man who in his eighties was still coining phrases about "selling the family silver" is an interesting question.

IF AN AMBITIOUS politician lacks the gift of flamboyance, then one of the ways he can get noticed is by flapping his wings against the bars of his cage. Macmillan was caged in two related ways: by his wealthy background and his membership of the Conservative Party. He used these bars creatively, in relation both to the unemployed in his constituency and to the radical opinions in his writings. These manoeuvres did not prevent him from being widely regarded as a rather boring figure, but they did get him noticed. In relation to the Churchill circle, he was sometimes judged as sycophantic. But, like Lloyd George, he had the gift for making people feel appreciated. It was a talent he was to use in a revealing episode in August 1956, recorded in an office memorandum by John Foster Dulles, the American Secretary of State whose ambiguous role in the whole drama of Suez was to cause so much of a problem.

> "As I was leaving Sir Anthony Eden's reception last night, Harold Macmillan said he would like to speak to me privately. . . . Macmillan asked first of all whether I planned to stay on as Secretary of State. He said that he was thinking of perhaps going back to take over the Foreign Office in the reasonably near future and that his decision in this matter would be influenced by whether I would be his *vis-à-vis* in the United States. He spoke of the very happy relations we had together when we were both Foreign Ministers and that he would very much like to renew this."

Macmillan then urged Dulles to take on the negotiations with Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser: "He [Macmillan] said he did not have confidence that anybody else could pull it off."

Horne observes that it was inconceivable that Macmillan could have returned to the Foreign Office under Eden, and adds: "But the exchange seems at least to indicate, once again, where Macmillan's heart still lay." What it indicates even more clearly is the skill with which Macmillan could use flattery to influence events and acquire useful information.

A kind of intimacy is a learned skill no less useful in the life of politics than the self-confidence of a Boothby or the intelligence of a Butler. As Horne remarks, Macmillan "was skilful in playing up to Dulles' considerable ego, making a delicate show of deference to his long experience of foreign affairs. . . ." One must say "a kind of intimacy" in describing this skill because it is hard not to sense a certain shallowness in Macmillan's personal relations. It is not that he did not actually like Dulles, for example, but rather that his political manoeuvring floated along on a kind of general amiability towards the world in general.

He seems to have got along with everybody, and indeed liked most people—except perhaps Herbert Morrison, for whom he entertained a hearty dislike. In later years, when he had triumphed, he sometimes indulged in contempt, especially towards politicians like Selwyn Lloyd, who resembled his younger self in lacking the *savoir faire* of easy confidence.

CYNICS SOMETIMES DOUBT whether politicians of a notably demagogic character—Lloyd George, for example—have any real existence when alone. Rather like animated puppets, they spring to life only in the presence of an audience. This is an exaggeration of the fact that the vocation of politics forces its practitioners to work even with people they may quite viscerally dislike. The practitioner of politics experiences the political filiations of his own ego and the world at large, the one reflecting the other. There need be little in between.

Macmillan does not immediately fit into this stereotype. No man could more easily stand being alone. His classical education remained vivid throughout his life, and he was

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a great reader of novels, having the enviable gift of being able to switch off and lose himself in fiction even amid the most nervewracking events. He was reading *Pride and Prejudice* ("very soothing") on the morning in 1957 when the call came to the Palace. There have been some notably cultivated British Prime Ministers in this century, but Macmillan can stand well in any comparison. Further, he could bring this cultivation into his conversation and his political life. Yet some recent critics have judged him a boring figure. In at least one sense this is clearly mistaken. A well-stocked mind, quick wits, a sense of irony and humour, a lack of pomposity—what more could one want?

The answer is, perhaps, a certain originality. Back in 1927, a journalist for the *Yorkshire Post* had commended Macmillan as a coming force in politics with the words: "He has the affinity with the spirit of the age [which guarantees] success in the political life of the future." What this meant was that Macmillan, by contrast with the supposedly bone-headed Tories of the shires, always kept up with the latest ideas. It was his destiny, however, to pick up the latest ideas during one of the feebler periods of British political thinking.

The progressives of this period believed that the increasing complexity of modern society posed problems which could only be solved if experts took over the levers of power and applied rational solutions to social problems. Socialists and New Liberals dominated a scene in which the dislocations of war and the instabilities of the economy made central planning an immensely plausible policy. It did not help that these ideas were held in a way that made discussion almost impossible. Dogmatism identified some policies with progress, others as outmoded. Where political sophistication consisted of having a doctrine, Conservatives found themselves in the hapless position of trying to be doctrinally undoctrinal. Churchill in the end was largely saved from this fate by an increasing preoccupation with foreign affairs, but the thinking Conservative of the period exemplified what Sir William Harcourt had said back in the previous century: "We are all socialists now." Some of them were still uttering their *mea culpas* in the 1970s.

What saved Macmillan from going all the way with "the spirit of the age" was his patriotism, which gave this idealist in domestic mattters a usefully hard-edged realism in the foreign affairs of the '30s. He was not tempted to put his faith in collective security. His taste for historical analogy qualified his inclination towards progressive opinion. He often saw modern Europe resembling the politics of the Mediterranean world in classical times. Britain was Greece in the Hellenistic period. In later years, his memories of the rise of the dictators provided a matrix within which he (and indeed many of his generation) interpreted Nasser's threat to the Canal.

HERE THEN was a man of grand historical sweep, often these days favourably compared to the present incumbent of Number 10. On closer examination, this catholicity of mind reveals limitations. Historical analogy is a dangerous game if it obscures distinctions lurking in the detail of the situations being compared. Its real practical use is in fact to bring out the differences of detail rather than to offer a structure which can be a direct guide to action. Used otherwise, the statesman can

CLASSIC TITLES FROM CASSELL

CASSELL BIOGRAPHIES

"An inspiring selection of larger-than-life biographies" *Daily Telegraph*

Titles include:

CHARLES DICKENS, *Pearson* £6.95 0 304 31553 2
MARIE ANTOINETTE, *Zweig* £7.95 0 304 31476 5
JOHNSON AND BOSWELL, *Pearson* £6.95 0 304 31440 4
KINGS OVER THE WATER, *Aronson* £6.95 0 304 32237 7
SIR WALTER SCOTT, *Buchan* £7.95 0 304 31437 4
EDMUND CAMPION, *Waugh* £4.95 0 304 31434 X
THE QUEEN OF SCOTS, *Zweig* £5.95 0 304 31439 0

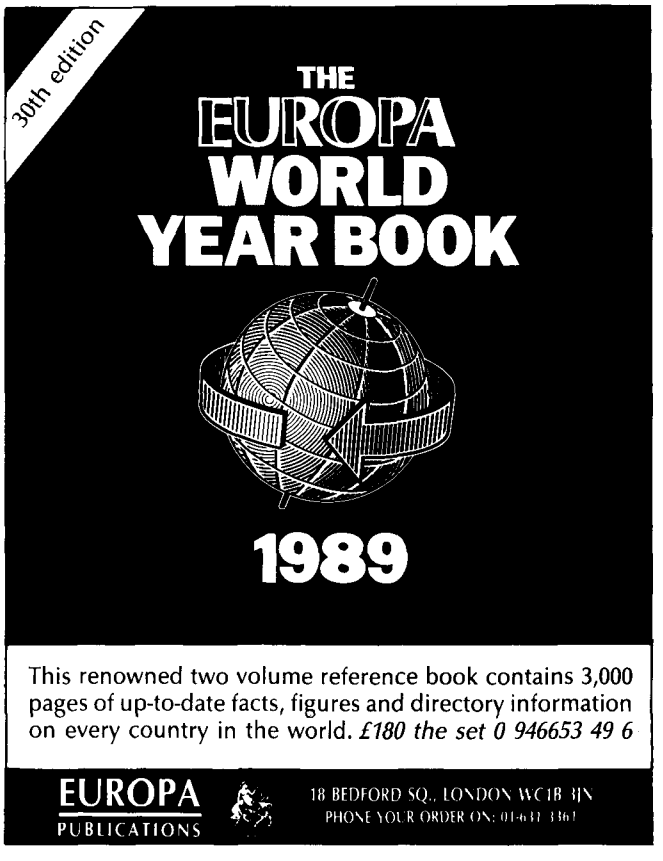
CASSELL HISTORIES

Renowned history titles now reissued in paperback

Titles include:

EVOLUTION OF DIPLOMATIC METHOD, *Nicholson* £4.95 0 304 32226 1
GEORGE III AND THE HISTORIANS, *Butterfield* £6.95 0 304 31609 1
THE FALL OF THE RUSSIAN MONARCHY, *Pares* £9.95 0 304 31610 5
GARIBALDI'S DEFENCE OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC, *Trevelyan* £6.95 0 304 32224 5

AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSELLERS OR DIRECT FROM: Cassell Plc, Stanley House, 3 Fleets Lane, Poole, Dorset BH15 3AJ. Tel: 0202 670581


30th edition
THE
EUROPA
WORLD
YEAR BOOK
1989
This renowned two volume reference book contains 3,000 pages of up-to-date facts, figures and directory information on every country in the world. £180 the set 0 946653 49 6
EUROPA
PUBLICATIONS
18 BEDFORD SQ., LONDON WC1B 3JN
PHONE YOUR ORDER ON: 01-631 3861

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

be seduced into mistaking an analogy for an identity, and the results can be unfortunate. The analogy between Nasser and Mussolini was not an adequate basis for dealing with the Suez Crisis. The crucial question, which Macmillan showed no signs of asking till late in the day, was put by the despised Selwyn Lloyd: "Supposing we had reoccupied Egypt, what would we have done with it?"

THE STRIKING THING about Macmillan's career is how far a man can go with intelligence, ambition, and a bit of luck, but almost no natural talent for statesmanship at all. And as with any politician, Harold Macmillan's education was acquired in the glare of public life. He was still working on it after the War, in opposition. Alastair Horne tells us:

> "Michael Foot recalled that he 'could hardly bear to listen to Macmillan speak [he was] so affected, pompous and portentous, and so artificial'. Macmillan's biographer and left-wing adversary, Emrys Hughes, accused him of having cultivated 'an oratorical style of the Gladstonian period. He would put his hands on the lapels of his coat and turn to the back benches behind him for approval and support. He would raise and lower his voice and speak as if he were on the stage. . . . His polished phrases reeked of midnight oil . . . did he know when he was acting and when he was not himself?'"

It is a deadly question. But what is clear is that by the time of Suez, the mask had become the man; and fortune threw into his lap a situation in which his natural qualities could operate to exhibit the skills he had learned.

At what precise moment Macmillan began to think that he might actually achieve the prime ministership is a question whose answer can only be indeterminate. To be a politician is to live on hope and to worship *fortuna*; possibilities shimmer around the edges of each unfolding event. Horne thinks that the moment came when Eden's illness could not but be recognised. The thesis that Eden didn't fall, but was pushed, would require Macmillan to have been nudging him towards folly from an early stage of the crisis—and one hesitates to think this likely. It would not even seem to be realistic. Quite what lurked in men's souls in the autumn of 1956 is a question beyond human capacity to answer. What is clear, however, is that, with the collapse of the Suez venture, a sequence of things happened for which the political education of Macmillan fitted him perfectly, while other political skills, such as those of R. A. Butler, were, like misapplied tools, to break in the hand.

Macmillan did start, of course, with certain clear advantages over Butler. For one thing, Butler was Eden's deputy and had to answer directly for the débâcle of Suez, while Macmillan could—and did—make himself scarce during this tense period. He appeared in the House of Commons only once. Butler was all the more exposed because he had a record of "wetness" going back to Munich. The result was that the hawks blamed him for the decision to halt the allied attack on the Canal, while his fellow doves felt that he had betrayed them by going along with the policy at all. A politician in this situation can sometimes retrieve himself by speaking with two voices, and this is precisely what Butler did. A reluctant public defence of the Suez policy was combined with an unofficial insistence on the seriousness of the situation. It did him no good. The whole time, as Anthony Head observed to Alistair Horne, Butler was saying, "On the one hand, on the other".

In different circumstances, it might have worked. The strengths and weaknesses of the two men were largely situational. Perhaps it all came down, in the end, to the fact that Butler did not really want the responsibility of the top job. That is what some suspected at the time. But there is certainly one point at which all of Macmillan's acquired skills allowed his virtues to shine forth, the decisive moment of his success. It was the meeting of the 1922 Committee on 22 November 1956. Butler and Macmillan both spoke, both recognised as rivals for the succession. Butler talked in matter of fact terms about immediate organisational problems. Macmillan followed him, and turned in one of his great performances, gazing into the middle distance, whistling up the grand historical analogies, gesturing, apparently, so expansively that "he nearly caused poor Rab to fall backwards from the adjacent seat", and altogether looking to a happier future which transcended the details of the mess they were in. The Party was reinvigorated; many remember the occasion vividly to this day. One of the most distinguished of them remarks: "It was horrible—seeing poor Rab commit suicide."

Macmillan had the look of a saviour, a man of action rather than an "academic", as Horne reports their sentiments. A man of action is certainly what he proved. He could put down Khruschev at the United Nations, and beard the Afrikaners in their homeland. He could restore the American Alliance by charming its Presidents, especially Kennedy, and cut his Cabinet down to size when it needed "refreshing". Twice he purged the Treasury when its Ministers stuck firm over keeping public expenditure down. At times he made Westminster "look like an abbattoir", as Gerald Nabarro commented. Macmillan the Prime Minister was a long way from the insecure, toothy idealist of the 1920s.

THERE IS, however, something self-defeating about the active character of the Macmillan prime ministership, rather as there is about that of his admirer, Harold Wilson, who was soon to follow him. Macmillan certainly kept the ship of state on course, eased Britain down gently in the world as seemed realistic at the time, kept peace at home, and behaved, according to one conception, as the very model of a Conservative Prime Minister. But another aspect of his rule comes out in his addiction to style, or coining phrases. He made it clear that he was in tune with the times, appealing over the heads of the children to his spiritual grandchildren. He made a killing in Edwardian nostalgia. The media demanded personality, and he gave them funny hats and throwaway gags. Dams were breaking in many corners of society as the Western world settled in to enjoy what seemed like an irresistible flow of prosperity, and Macmillan encouraged a contrast between what he was, and where his sympathies lay. An old British imperial hawk of distinctly Blimpish appearance talked about the winds of change. He presaged the *Zeitgeist* of the '60s,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and, appropriately enough, became one of its first victims.

His life provides a variety of materials to support diverse interpretations of what he amounted to, so that there is no need, it seems to me, to doubt his courage, public-spiritedness, or patriotism. Complex personalities may be metaphorically grasped in terms of levels, and the problem of understanding Macmillan is a matter of exploring the relation between those levels. The key might be found in his character as a young idealist and an old cynic. What cynicism means here is that ultimately he distanced himself from the world in which he exercised power: at bottom, he only cared to keep the surfaces undisturbed.

The move from idealism in youth to cynicism in age is only superficially paradoxical: the obvious link, in general terms, is disappointment. In any individual case, however, there will be specific reasons for such an evolution. Horne suggests that the roots of cynicism in Macmillan lay in the miseries of marital disappointment in the 1930s—and perhaps there is something in this. But one might also suggest that shy young men who begin their lives over-impressed by politics may finish under-impressed, roughly in proportion to their own success. It wasn't only Groucho Marx who couldn't respect any club that would accept him as a member. The political activity that was to improve the world of the '20s had become a theatrical performance by the '60s.

Some politicians are pragmatic because they lack the courage to sail into the wind. It is clear from many moving passages in Horne's treatment of the early life that Macmillan lacked neither moral nor physical courage. But in the event he became, in the context of mid-century Britain, an elegant drifter, as a result of cynicism, the lack of originality in an otherwise highly intelligent mind, and perhaps the influence of that fatal link to the spirit of the age.

It was an age in which the rhetoric of pragmatism and flexibility was dangerously loosening the moorings of the entrenched English penchant for empiricism, making the country vulnerable to instant solutions to what it took to be its problems—higher education, technology, social contracts and the like. Just as the dominant idea of the 1920s had been the need for rational planning to bring order to a disrupted society, so the dominant idea of the articulate in Britain in the late '50s was that stuffy, class-bound structures were repressing the energies and talents of the people—a version of the ubiquitous 20th-century modernisation fantasy which Macmillan obviously found congenial.

MACMILLAN'S conventional upper-class exterior masked a strong desire to be "with it", and possibly also an alienation from the stuffier aspects of British upper-class life. The various levels of his personality were limited by the ideas he had absorbed during his youthful idealism. His addiction to the conception of the economy as a kind of giant Wurlitzer organ made him unwilling to suffer any political backwash from policies of financial strictness. It was in part his public-spiritedness which disposed him towards sympathy for the poor and unemployed, reanimating the corporatist ideas of an earlier period. The form this took was a conviction that a working class which had suffered considerable hardships for

HARVESTER
WHEATSHEAF

The Face of the Crowd
Studies in Revolution, Ideology and Popular Protest. Selected Essays of George Rudé
GEORGE RUDÉ
Edited by HARVEY J. KAYE
This superb collection of essays features the work of George Rudé upon popular protest, crime and ideology. The editor carefully examines the intrinsic relationship of ideology in all popular protest as well as reviewing these with the social and economic context of nineteenth century crime.
160pp HB 0 7108 1239 6 **£25.00** Available

The Making of an Historian
The Collected Essays of J. H. Plumb, Vol. I.
J. H. PLUMB
In this volume, Professor Plumb writes of his decision to become an historian, his rise from provincial Leicester to the heights of the academic world, and his duel with the brilliant but awesome personality of Lewis B. Namier. The book both presents research of fundamental importance for eighteenth century history and describes an intellectual odyssey.
416pp Hb 0 7108 1253 1 **£40.00** Available

The American Experience
The Collected Essays of J. H. Plumb, Vol. II.
This book brings together Professor Plumb's most important writings on American history, assesses the historiographical debate over **American Slavery**, and provides his own assessment of the American Experience.
288pp Hb 0 7108 1254 X **£30.00** Available

Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall 1307-1312
Politics and Patronage in the Reign of George II
J. S. HAMILTON
Piers Gaveston is perhaps the most infamous royal favourite in English history. Using both documentary and narrative sources, J. S. Hamilton reconstructs an impartial account of Gaveston's life inevitably leading to broader questions of patronage, personality, and the nature of the baronial position to the crown .
192pp Hb 0 7108 1378 3 **£30.00** Available

Sexual Visions
Images of Gender in Science and Medicine Between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries
LUDMILLA JORDANOVA
Sexual Visions is a book which makes a powerful, and utterly convincing, statement about the cultural intertwining of science and sexuality. It is not only a landmark in the history and philosophy of science, but also makes a major contribution to the fields of women's studies, biology, art history and cultural studies.
224pp Hb 0 7450 0332 X **£19.95** March 1989

FORTHCOMING
In The Nineties
JOHN STOKES
John Stokes' lively study is an exercise in interdisciplinary criticism inspired by the decade it observes. Not since Holbrook Jackson's *The Eighteen Nineties*, first published in 1913, has there been such a wide-ranging and imaginative enquiry into its concerns.
224pp Hb 0 7450 0604 3 **£17.50** May 1989
Illustrated

HARVESTER WHEATSHEAF
SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERNATIONAL GROUP
66 Wood Lane End, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4RG, England.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

generations ought to share in the benefits of the emerging prosperity.

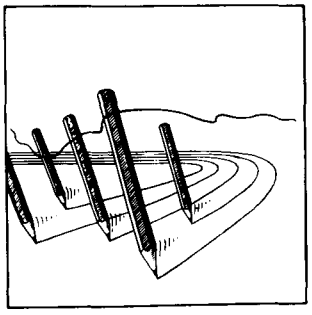
This sounds like an innocent belief, but in fact it stacks the cards in favour of bureaucratic solutions by recognising "the working class" as a political entity and its appropriate role as something called "sharing". A mode of thought which begins, in these subtle ways, on the wrong foot leads directly to the idea that the benefits of prosperity should be distributed by professional managers—by the government, through welfare, by the unions, through collective bargaining. Pragmatism thus made him the Prime Minister of all the vested interests which had battened on to mid-century Britain. All they needed was a bit of sentimental rhetoric.

ALISTAIR HORNE's treatment of Macmillan is a brilliant account of a political education. It is, however, almost entirely blind to what might be called the Machiavellian dimension of his political skill. There is no sense of the mechanisms of support on which the successes depended. Acclaim from constituents opportunely arrives to allow Macmillan to get back his seat, MPs vote for him, but Macmillan's links with his supporters go undiscussed, as if they were spontaneous eruptions of nature. What Horne has made clear, however, is the almost stoic virtue with which a long career of disappointments was turned to success.

No office came to Macmillan till he was over forty; when he had at last established himself as a Minister during World War II, he found himself hurled into Opposition. When at last the Conservatives came to power, he was given the Ministry of Housing, which was far from what he wanted. Each setback he turned into a triumph, rising until he eventually dominated the game. But political success is not the same as statesmanship, and we should beware of setting Macmillan up as an icon of gentler times. For, as Thomas Hobbes points out, men often praise the dead in order to denigrate the living.

The Sands of Time

Biographical Dilemmas—By GILLIAN TINDALL



HERE IS A little problem. You have been invited to write the authorised biography of a recently dead Famous Man. Let us say that the FM was not a writer, actor or artist or even a politician, but belonged to the dwindling élite of those who, even in these forgiving times, are expected to maintain their personal life in a state that bears inspection. A High Court Judge, perhaps, with a line in humane reforming zeal—or, better still, an Archbishop who has been loved and revered for similar reasons. The widow has flatteringly chosen you for the job rather than several other candidates, and is allowing you the run of the FM's papers: she says she misses her husband so much that it upsets her even to look at all his stuff (he died very suddenly, and they had no children) so she won't come into the loft with you, but you are welcome to spend months there if you like, and will you have a cup of coffee?

So you settle down happily to your task, with the publisher's respectable advance payment to you like a pleasant warmth at the back of your mind—you have already invested some of it in a new word-processor in anticipation of the great work ahead. And what do you find?

No, nothing that would be generally regarded as vice: no explicit pictures of naked children, no whips or chains or other evidence of a seismological rift running through the personality of your subject. However, it becomes clear that for many years he sustained a passionate emotional and sexual relationship with his wife's sister, who is now her only surviving relative and (you happen to know) her one emotional prop. It is also clear that the FM went to great lengths to keep the whole matter secret from his wife as well as the world, and that the sister-in-law perfectly understood that this was part of the deal. In fact, the FM's one indiscretion seems to have been that he preserved the correspondence at all, an error he would no doubt have remedied with his usual efficiency had the Angel of Death given him a little warning.

So what do you do? If you write your biography, making use of the information you have acquired, to present the most honest, rounded picture of the FM that you can, you may or may not damage his image before the world (you may or may not be allowed to publish it) but you will certainly have done violence to his widow's cherished memory of him, and you will probably ruin the one close relationship left to her.

If, however, you proceed as if the sister-in-law letters did not exist, your biography will not be a true picture of the man and will not, of course, be half as interesting as the one you would like to write. Nor will it sell as well. For the moment, no one will know this besides yourself, but your own interest, pleasure and pride in the whole enterprise will be irreparably dimmed. Moreover, the inevitable biographer of the future, able to act with a freer hand when the widow and sister are safely dead, may make your considerate effort look craven and you rather silly.

Suppose you destroy the letters, so that your future rival can never get his hands on them? No, no, unthinkable! In the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moral canon of biography such an act would be unutterably base; compared with that, sustained adultery appears a mild peccadillo. Desperate now about your projected book (as cherished, in its own way, as a spouse) you pin all your hopes on the idea that the widow might, after all, die soon herself, thereby releasing you from the worst part of your dilemma. She is old herself, she doesn't have much to live for. . . . You begin darkly to contemplate—well, let's not call it "murder", but a sort of mercy killing, in order to spare her. . . .

THIS SCENARIO can be elaborated and extended to taste. (Is the sister-in-law also married? Or would she *like* the world/her sister to hear about her great affair . . . ?) The different solutions suggested by your friends are an interesting sidelight on their own moral preoccupations—but essentially the dilemma expresses the priorities of our time. We of the post-Lytton-Strachey era (or should it be the post-Michael-Holroyd one?) make the basic assumption that biography should be concerned with telling the truth. Or rather, as Julian Symons pointed out in a lecture to the Royal Society of Literature a few years back, not *the* truth, a notional goal which can never be definitively reached, but *a* truth.

We have almost forgotten how different things were in the days of Great Men when the authorised biographer was expected to bowdlerise, omit, and otherwise have an eye to the sensibilities of both the family and the world: that, indeed, is why he was authorised to poke around in the first place. We can never go back to that; hagiography is a discredited literary form, automatically suspect, and the moral goalposts have shifted to such an extent that concealment is more likely to be castigated than revelation. Recent exposure by Vincent Brome of J. B. Priestley's untiring promiscuity raised few eyebrows, merely a passing commendation to his widow for having tolerated all this calmly; whereas the fact of C. P. Snow's extra-marital activity, as disclosed by his brother, evoked a slightly patronising attitude toward the (safely dead) Pamela Hansford Johnson because she failed to know.

STILL LESS, these days, are the sensibilities of peripheral figures such as descendants of FMs consulted—though sometimes these slighted figures become restive: breach-of-copyright law may be inappropriately invoked to stop verbatim publication of letters or diaries, but such attempted censorship does nothing to prevent a determined biographer from recounting the facts in paraphrase. In the present climate of truth-seeking, T. S. Eliot's widow has attracted considerable odium for trying to keep would-be biographers off her preserve: it has even been intimated—and there is a certain self-fufilling if unfair validity in the charge—that her obstinacy has done much to create a climate of suspicion and rumour that has darkened Eliot's image. Indeed, so fraught with conflicting moralities has the whole issue become that a new kind of meta-biography has been spawned, the quest after an unwilling subject, of which Ian Hamilton's recent book on J. D. Salinger is only the prototype.

Yet meanwhile in worlds where the dubious probity of biographer-as-sleuth is not even debated, pre-Lytton-Strachey Lives are still being produced. Presumably they exist to please a coterie readership. What else is one to make of Howard Vogt's book of Kirsten Flagstad, the Norwegian opera star?[1] Flagstad's war record during Norway's Occupation, like that of her industrialist husband, was dubious, and merely to quote letters from friends referring simplistically to her "total lack of interest in politics" is not an adequate way of addressing the complex and classic 20th-century dilemma of the Entertainer facing the Invader.

Again, perhaps it is understandable that biographers whose main interest is in music should lack the literary acumen of those whose own sphere is words, but the book on Tchaikovsky by Alan Kendall,[2] who has produced previous biographies of composers and is also the general editor of Oxford University Press's *The Heritage of Music*, strikes a curiously muffled note. Not precisely dull, his style manages somehow to distance us from his subject, and even the presence of new information, "smuggled out of Russia", on Tchaikovsky's personal relationships and his suicide, fails to make this portrait as arresting as one feels it should be.

Far more compelling is *A Singular Marriage*, a compilation of the letters and diaries of Ramsay MacDonald, the first Labour Prime Minister, and his wife, strung together with a minimum of factual information.[3] Ramsay's extremely modest origins (birth in a Scottish croft with no father in evidence) come to life in the short, phonetically-spelt notes from his old mother to his dynamic, upper-middle-class young wife, Margaret. His own warmth and vulnerability are similarly present in the chatty, emphatic, private-code missives that passed between them, and in his poignant journal entry made after the death from diphtheria of one of their children but before he knew that Margaret too was soon to die:

> "Sometimes I feel like a lone dog in the desert howling from pain of heart. Constantly since he died my little boy has been my companion—especially on my railway journeys."

The book is modestly described as being "edited" by Jane Cox, and indeed it strikes one as an odd hybrid—not a biography, but some of the material for one, as if Jane Cox (who organised the Domesday exhibition for the Public Record Office) had discarded the old-style "X must have felt" school of writing, but did not find the conviction to escape from the tyranny of the linear, factual account into some more fused, conceptionalised presentation of a personality.

COMPARED WITH THESE oddly unaware efforts, Fiona MacCarthy's biography of Eric Gill[4] is a masterly piece of work, meticulous yet vivid, thoroughly involved with the subject yet leaving the suppositions and moral judgments to the reader. It is also a skilful balancing act: there is ample evidence here both for the reader who

[1] *Flagstad: Singer of the Century*. By HOWARD VOGT. Secker & Warburg, £20.00.

[2] *Tchaikovsky: A Biography*. By ALAN KENDALL. The Bodley Head, £15.00.

[3] *A Singular Marriage: A Labour Love Story in Letters and Diaries*. Edited by JANE COX. Harrap, £14.95.

[4] *Eric Gill*. By FIONA MACCARTHY. Faber & Faber, £17.50.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

would maintain that Gill, in spite of everything, was a great innovative artist, and for the one who is glad of the opportunity to have confirmed a long-standing suspicion that he was a sentimental, salacious fraud—a Mr Mybug who ought to have been excoriated in satire by Huxley or Waugh rather than acclaimed as a latter-day Catholic saint. The plentiful illustrations also allow one to admire Gill's calligraphy—the single indisputably admirable element in his work—while permitting one to decide at leisure *(a)* that some of his sculpture was, in its time, revolutionary; and/or *(b)* that much of it is carved out of chocolate blancmange.

YET THERE IS something important missing from this fine book. Its revelation of Gill's sexual fumblings with his own daughters has achieved instant notoriety where reviews, let alone books, are read. Certainly Fiona MacCarthy was "right", by present-day attitudes to biography, not to suppress these facts as earlier writers on Gill have done. But such rigorousness brings further obligations in its train: I think we also need to know what the daughters, now elderly, think about their father's goatishness and, even more, what they think about having it revealed to the world. The small print of the "Sources" reveals that the author was in communication with at least one of them, but what of the numerous grandchildren, the wider family? Surely she must have had to warn them what she was up to. Did anyone try to stop her, was the law at any point invoked, did relatives war with each other about it . . . ? Or has the whole dynasty been so indoctrinated by Gill's own dotty double-think that they are happily impervious to the rest of the world? Post-publication, Fiona MacCarthy has revealed in a short article (*The Sunday Times*, 5 February 1989) that "some of the Gill family are showing signs of panic"; but presumably this is in response to the fuss that has attended her revelations rather than at the revelations themselves; and it is about those that we need to know.

To have all this explored may sound like an excessive demand, but standards of biography have now become so high that such a demand is the inevitable next step. A—or even "the"—truth is not after all enough: it is the whole truth which must at least be attempted, even if it remains forever unattainable.

The Gill we see now is not the one his contemporaries saw, but each age recreates the celebrated figures of the past according to its own preoccupations. Other Gills, embodying other aspects of truth, may yet be waiting in the wings.

Superpower Emeritus

The British Example—By RICHARD MAYNE

MODESTY is a virtue which citizens of some countries find hard to acquire. Belgians, Dutchmen, and *a fortiori* Luxembourgers will cheerfully confess that theirs are small countries, even that they themselves are "small people". In private, no doubt, they add "and realistic, with no illusions of grandeur"—a not always modest claim. Italians, likewise, often play up to the national stereotype, pretending to be slapdash and scapegrace, but at the same time cynical and shrewd. Many Germans, finally, are so conscious of the still recent past that they take exceptional precautions against seeming to know better than their neighbours, even when they obviously do.

Frenchmen, Britons, and Americans start from an opposite point of view. Deep down, they seldom feel themselves inferior. At the time of the oil crisis in the 1970s, admittedly, a favourite French slogan conceded: "*Nous n'avons pas de pétrole* . . ." and it went on: "*Mais nous avons des idées.*" The wily Astérix the Gaul would once more outwit his powerful enemies. The British, too, once notably advertised a theatrical "Evening of British Rubbish". But by smiling at the reproach they no doubt felt that they were drawing its sting; and few of them would dream of questioning the eternal boast that their television is "the best in the world".

Viet Nam, drugs, and the state of the New York subway have all helped to dent some Americans' belief that theirs is God's own country: but Europeans can still be brought up short by instances of breath-taking arrogance—all the more startling because unconscious and innocent. To be sure, no rival seems likely to threaten, still less to supersede, the role of the United States as the world's strongest power. But all power has its limits; and the pattern of constraints and influences in the rest of the world is by no means constant. Long ago, Sputnik and the Soviet acquisition of nuclear and chemical weapons replaced US supremacy with superpower stalemate. Japan became a serious economic competitor. International terrorism became a significant challenge. Pollution began to appear as a global threat. The Gorbachov *détente* called some assumptions into question. Western Europe's quest for unity redrew some familiar maps. The US deficit impinged on the military budget. The old simplicities of the Truman-Acheson era are long gone.

Two contrasting reactions seem likely: on the one hand,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

assertions that nothing has changed; on the other, excessive humility. President Reagan perhaps best exemplified the former; and Paul Kennedy's *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*[1] undoubtedly ministers to the latter. Those with a taste for apocalyptic exaggeration may even be tempted to see the United States as a superpower emeritus—a venerated, venerable figure working all the harder to prove that he has not really retired.

THIS, I BELIEVE, is nonsense: but in a world of bewildering, multiple changes Americans do face the need to adjust their attitudes without losing their poise. Here, there may be lessons to learn from a real superpower emeritus, the United Kingdom, whose mistakes and successes could serve as both warnings and guides.

Heaven forbid that Britain should presume to preach. But over a period of about 60 years many Britons have witnessed tangible changes, which some would describe as catastrophic, and others as long incubated and, in certain cases, long overdue.

In the 1930s, British children were still taught to admire maps and globes with large areas of red on them, denoting the British Empire and the Dominions. Towards the end of the decade, Britain was recovering from the Depression. Many middle-class families, often with resident servants, could afford new houses in the prosperous suburbs and, for the first time, motor cars. The London Underground, clean and modern, seemed a model urban transport system. Reapers-and-binders, forerunners of the combine harvester, were a new wonder of the countryside: but stooks and haystacks and cart-horses were still the norm. Boy Scouts wore bush hats and corduroy shorts. Some kind of headgear was almost universal. Burglar alarms were a rarity. Popular music was tuneful. The streets were clean. "Foreign" goods were regarded as cheap and nasty. British was unashamedly best.

No wonder that present-day Britons show increasing interest in their past, whether through wartime or earlier dramas on television, stately homes open to the public, historical novels, museums, or written history, scholarly or popular. The past is indeed another country, and some think it preferable to our own. Still more, with change so headlong, people are increasingly concerned to preserve what remains.

"HATFIELD", wrote Oliver Rackham in 1976, "is the only place where one can step back into the Middle Ages to see, with only a small effort of the imagination, what a Forest looked like in use." He quotes this remark in his new, book-length study of the Forest; but the Middle Ages are only part of the story. It begins in the last-but-one Ice Age, and ends with current debates about how to conserve a perhaps unique relic.[2] As in his award-winning *The History of the Countryside*, Dr Rackham writes with sceptical, tough-minded zest and humour, unafraid to topple preconceptions and well-meant panaceas.

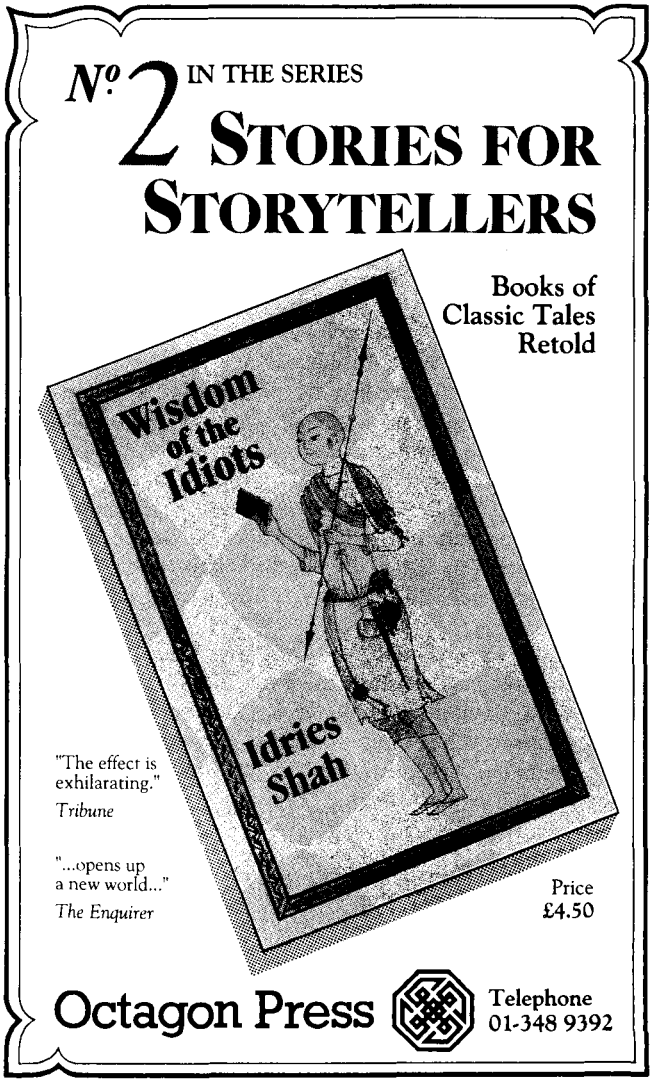
"Forests", he declares, "are one of the most prolific fields of pseudo-history."

> "We still read, for example, that Forests necessarily have to do with trees; that medieval England was very wooded; that the king's hunting was protected by savage laws and extreme punishments; that trees disappeared because people cut them down to build ships; that trees can only be regained by planting them; and that the Forestry Commission is heir to the ancient Forest administration. The story reads well and makes excellent sense, but has no connection with the real world; it cannot be sustained from the records of any actual Forest or wood."

With maps, charts, and photographs, Dr Rackham provides vivid and detailed pictures of the Forest at various stages of its history, and fleshes out the story with quotations from rolls, charters, surveys, court proceedings, and modern reports.

[1] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (Random House, Unwin Hyman, 1988).

[2] *The Last Forest: The Story of Hatfield Forest*. By OLIVER RACKHAM. J. M. Dent, £16.95.



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His expertise rivals his scholarship. When it comes to conservation, he notes that in the early years of the National Trust's involvement with the Forest, "the chief peril may have been tidying-up"—sawing down and burning the stumps of trees snapped by storms. In 1977, the Trust began a salutary process of re-pollarding.

> "The care and perpetuation of ancient trees is a test of human tenacity of purpose and attention to detail. The idea that pollards and hollow trees are somehow abnormal no longer prevails, but the urge to burn up fallen trees and rotten logs lives on. This can be disastrous for the rare Forest animals and plants."

There are also conflicts between conservation interests, for example between coppicing and deer—lethal browsers, but essential denizens. "The traditional method of temporary deer-proof fences seems to be beyond the resources of the twentieth century."

Airports, however, are not; and the greatest threat to the medieval Forest would now seem to be Stansted, sliding into full airport status with Government connivance, despite vociferous objections by local residents and unpopularity with the airlines. If it develops further, Dr Rackham fears, atmospheric pollution (and people pollution) will grow. Here, as so often with "historical trends", including "unstoppable growth" and "inevitable decline", the real point is that there are choices to be made. Dr Rackham believes that the Forest needs a management plan, widely published, to preserve the knowledge, experience, and intentions of wise men and women whose expertise may otherwise die with them.

One choice, almost universally discounted, might be to opt for artisanship rather than airports—for labour-intensive activities rather than high tech. Instead of mourning the past but consoling ourselves with television and other junk luxuries, we might opt to recreate it, at least in part. Some minorities already have, establishing craft occupations in remote areas or—at the top of the market and on weekends—using wind and muscle power in various outdoor sports. More generally, unease about factory farming, surplus production, cruelty to animals, water pollution, despoiled landscapes, and food poisoning has increased the pressure for "organic" farm methods, using natural fertilisers, fewer pesticides, and possibly less machinery. G. K. Chesterton, when told "You can't put the clock back", used to point out that on the contrary you can.

An exhilarating thought: but not true of all time-pieces, especially watches that show the date. No return to the past can be total. Even if we renounce, say, electricity and build a charcoal-burner's hut in an ancient woodland, we still crawl into it with our modern minds, in the midst of a modern country in the modern world. True history, too, has the sad task of disillusioning romantic nostalgia. The good old days were not, for most people, especially good.

TO DOCUMENT that, one need only examine the eye-witness reports compiled in the 1870s and 1880s by Richard Heath, collected in 1893 as *The English Peasant* and now republished in abridged form, with wonderfully evocative photographs.[3] Although nearly a generation later, Heath is a rural Mayhew.

> "Compare the stalwart, jovial forms of the elderly farmers with that of the rheumatic misshapen forms of the old labourers, and the evil result, not only of over-early work, but of a lifetime of poor and insufficient food and bad lodging will be manifest. . . .
>
> One must pass up and down the Weald in winter-time and in rainy weather, note how they have neither cisterns or drainage, how therefore they suffer from thirst in the dog-days when all the springs are dry, and have floors swamped when the rainy season sets in, while the house-filth oozes out from a slit in the wall to trickle into the garden or wayside gutter."

There is plenty more to the same effect; and although the picture lightens in summer and in the neat, clean cottages of the more prosperous poor, Heath amply confirms the truism that when Britain was at the height of her power in the world, many were living in the depths of poverty in Britain.

Nor, of course, was world power without its drawbacks—even from the viewpoint of those supposedly possessing it. The British in India brought back wistful memories as well as Benares ware and new words like mogul, bungalow, verandah, shampoo, and loot. But they also suffered—from heat, mosquitoes, cholera, fleas, bad drainage, and boredom. Of 9,467 soldiers who died up to and including the Indian Mutiny, only 586 were killed in action. The chequered tale is retold amiably and anecdotally in Michael Edwardes's *The Sahibs and the Lotus*[4]—although almost entirely from the British point of view. That not all Britain's colonists were sahibs or memsahibs is made very clear in Joanna Trollope's study of women in the British Empire, *Britannia's Daughters*.[5] A number were "fallen women", cousins of Defoe's Moll Flanders, transported for theft. But even grand ladies had a rough time, coping with disease and discomfort and sometmes danger; while humble governesses, some of them husband-hunting, faced unruly charges and ignominious chores.

RUDYARD KIPLING'S *Recessional*, despite its ignoble reference to "lesser breeds without the Law", was in fact a warning that Empires pass.

Lo, all our pomp of yesterday
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre!

Although published in *The Times* in 1897, two years into the ten (1895-1905) examined by Aaron L. Friedberg in *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline*,[6] the poem is neither quoted nor mentioned in the book. Professor Friedberg concentrates instead on the economic, financial, and military indices of this period of slow

---

[3] *The English Peasant*. By RICHARD HEATH. Edited by KEITH DOCKRAY. Alan Sutton/St Martin's Press, £12.95.

[4] *The Sahibs and the Lotus: The British in India*. By MICHAEL EDWARDES. Constable, £14.95.

[5] *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire*. By JOANNA TROLLOPE. Cresset Women's Voices, £5.95.

[6] *The Weary Titan: Britain and the Experience of Relative Decline, 1895-1905*. By AARON L. FRIEDBERG. Princeton University Press, $29.95, £16.90.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

transition in Britain's history. One of his avowed purposes is to compare Britain's faltering position then with the United States' problematic future now.

> "Both either are or were essentially insular, liberal democratic, capitalist, great powers with interests and commitments scattered around the globe. . . . By certain gross measures, in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century there was a decline in Britain's relative stature as other countries increased their capabilities even more rapidly than Britain could expand its own. Again, similar observations have been made about the most recent phase of American history. . . .
>
> The questions that informed Englishmen were asking themselves at the beginning of this century will have a familiar ring to American ears."

Is the apparent relative decline real, and if so, inevitable? Is it the result of errors? What can be done to restore the economic position? Should there be free trade or protectionism? Can we afford our current commitments? How should we divide resources between overseas responsibilities and domestic welfare? These, in condensed form, are Professor Friedberg's questions; and while he makes no attempt to answer them in their current American context, his acute, painstaking study shows how urgently they were asked in Britain at the turn of the century and how hotly historians debate them even now.

The essential problem was the trade-off between domestic and overseas spending. A bigger defence budget would have required more austerity at home: but Britain's democratic institutions were unable to deliver the necessary package. Still, Professor Friedberg believes:

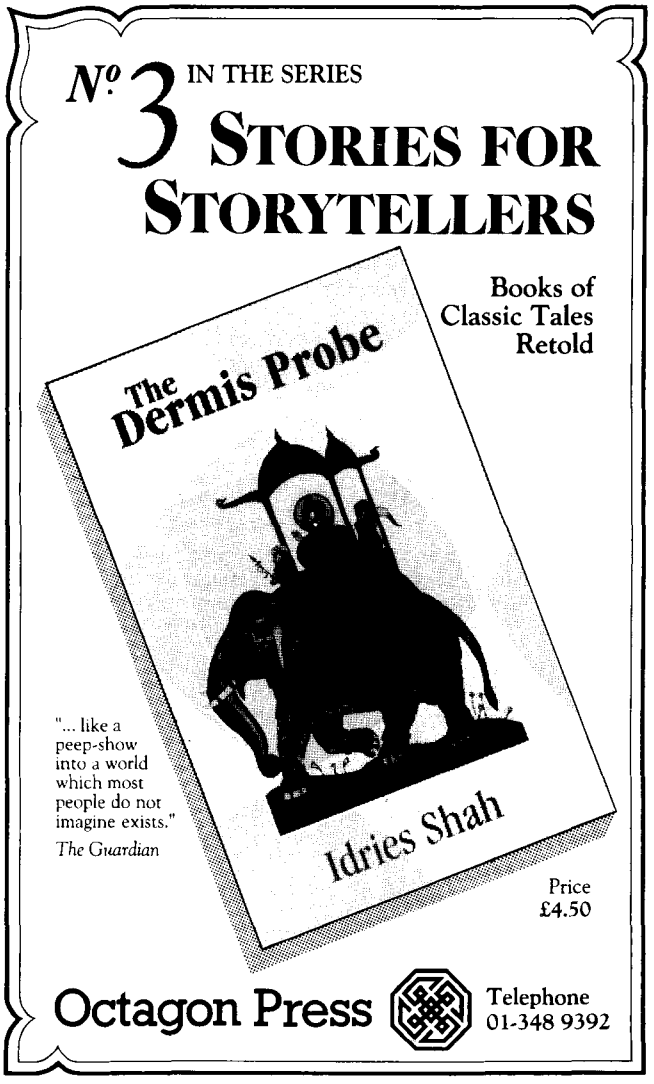
> "Comparatively small changes in accepted practices might . . . have paid reasonable and perhaps even disproportionate long-term strategic dividends. Certainly a modest degree of government intervention in the economy, somewhat higher tax rates, greater proportionate levels of defense spending, and even peacetime conscription were, if not inherently desirable, at least not fundamentally incompatible with democracy or, necessarily, with economic growth. . . .
>
> There would surely have been dangers involved. . . . But there were dangers, too, in trying to continue to play the part of a world power without being willing to pay for the privilege."

Almost a memo to President Bush.

BUT THE BRITISH, like most nations, sit with their backs to the engine, carried perforce into the future with their eyes fixed on the past. When Harold Macmillan nudged Britain towards the European Community or measured the wind of change in Africa, he was careful to do so in impeccable Edwardian camouflage. And the Monarchy, as sharp-witted and up-to-date as any British institution—compare Prince Charles's brushes with architects and espousal of "organic" farming—provides a similar sense of reassuring continuity in a time of change.

So much so that a Left-wing opponent of Royalty, Tom Nairn, found it worth while to devote a whole book to a study of the Monarchy's influence in Britain, whose present state he described in one of many memorable phrases as "phosphorescent populism presided over by high-cultural gloom, fake rusticity and an almost Viennese nostalgia for the days of yore".[7] His legal and constitutional analysis seems to me superficial. What matters, in Whitehall and Westminster, is much more than the letter of a Constitution which is in any case unwritten. But psychologically, and almost against his own stated intentions, Tom Nairn repeatedly hits the nail on the head. In the last 50 years, in fact, the Royals have become ever more the focus of attention—the ultimate *circenses* to accompany the *panem* of disappointing everyday life. The Kennedy family once performed a similar role in Washington. Some now predict a character part for Mrs Bush.

David Sinclair's rather gloomy study of the modern British monarchy, *Two Georges*,[8] starts from very different pre-


No 3 IN THE SERIES
STORIES FOR STORYTELLERS
Books of Classic Tales Retold
The Dermis Probe
"... like a peep-show into a world which most people do not imagine exists."
The Guardian
Idries Shah
Price £4.50
Octagon Press
Telephone 01-348 9392

[7] *The Enchanted Glass: Britain and its Monarchy*. By TOM NAIRN Radius, £25.00.

[8] *Two Georges: The Making of the Modern Monarchy*. By DAVID SINCLAIR. Hodder & Stoughton, £16.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TWO 20th CENTURY CLASSICS
Political Biographical Studies of Exceptional Interest
Now reprinted in fine library editions

THE RED PRUSSIAN
The Life and Legend by Karl Marx
by
LEOPOLD SCHWARZSCHILD
New edition with introduction by Antony Flew
(First published 1948)

"Schwarzschild described [Marx] as a man who saw in the 'proletariat' mainly an instrument of his own personal ambition . . . the evidence is shattering."
– Karl Popper: *The Open Society & Its Enemies*

£16.00

HITLER'S CHILDREN
The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang
by
JILLIAN BECKER
3rd Edition
(First published 1977; second edition 1978)

"An important and highly readable book, thoroughly researched and written with the pace and excitement of a crime thriller." – *TLS*
"An admirable mixture of painstaking research, infinite understanding, nicely judged scepticism and a strong sense of irony." – *The Times*

Forthcoming, summer 1989 c.£25

PICKWICK BOOKS PO Box 925 LONDON W2 1FA

PB

The only writer to really question the state and its democratic failure

Rodney Atkinson's distinction between *Emancipated* and *Dependent* Societies establishes a new map of politics, explaining why socialists are discovering markets, why Capitalism has discovered Thatcherism and why Communists have discovered Gorbachev.

THE EMANCIPATED SOCIETY
State Authority and Individual Freedom

"Powerful, erudite," Dr John Gray, Jesus College, Oxford
"An illuminating beam of light" Rt Hon David Howell
"A brilliant polemic" Professor Norman Barry
"A Powerful contribution" Crossbow

GOVERNMENT AGAINST THE PEOPLE

"Excellent, fascinating" Milton Friedman
"Excellent, devastating" George Gilder
"An excellent book" Sunday Times

Compuprint Publishing, 4 Sands Road, Swalwell, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE16 3DJ

Please send to: .....

.....

. . . copies of ***The Emancipated Society*** at £10.95 each

. . . copies of ***Government against the People*** at £6.00 each

I enclose a cheque for £.....

conceptions from those of Tom Nairn. "The history of the monarchy in the twentieth century", he writes,

> "has been one of effectiveness sacrificed on the altar of popularity, of continuing retreat into a never-never land of empty glamour and fairytale simplicity, of steady decline towards irrelevance and, unless there is a change, ultimate extinction."

David Sinclair would regret this, because he seeks for the Monarchy a constitutional role rather like that ascribed to it by Tom Nairn—representing "a state that exists in itself, independently of the changing fortunes of political parties, so that there is a level of politics that transcends partisan sympathies". These, he believes, have become so sharply polarised as to encourage "extra-parliamentary action", with the twin dangers of anarchy or authoritarianism.

To many people, such drastic fears may have a 19th-century ring. Anarchism haunted our great-great-grandparents; and debates about constitutional monarchy seem curiously faded today. The forces affecting nations are more than national. The trick, for Governments, is to learn to sail in convoy without either colliding with or losing each other, while retaining as much sea-room as possible to manoeuvre on their own. Each likes to think itself a solo performer: but the illusion can be costly to maintain.

FORD MADOX FORD, of all people, discerned this back in the 1920s. Although primarily a novelist, author of *The Good Soldier* and *Parade's End*, he wrote the first volume of a huge synoptic work, *A History of Our Own Times*. Never published in his lifetime, it has now been edited by two American professors whose respective disciplines of History and English aptly reflect Ford's double concerns.[9]

> "It has been for many years the passionate belief of this writer [Ford declared] that all we peoples round the North Atlantic are in truth one people—one in the quality of our corporate inspirations, our individual hopes, our ideals, our fears, our despairs. . . .
>
> We are . . . at one in everything save the barriers that we still maintain at our frontiers; and those barriers are purely artificial and, by all logic, absurd."

That was written in 1929, in New York. What Ford had in mind was clearly an Atlantic, not only a European Community. It might have been more feasible when the United States was not yet a superpower. "In the early thirties", as William Manchester points out in the second volume of his huge and readable biography of Winston Churchill, "the average Englishman's exposure to American culture—and he enjoyed it immensely—was chiefly confined to motion pictures."[10] Stanley Baldwin could still declare:

> "The British Empire stands firm, as a great force for good. It stands in the sweep of every wind, by the wash of every sea."

---

[9] *A History of Our Own Times*. By FORD MADOX FORD. Edited by SOLON BEINFELD and SONDRA J. STANG. Indiana University Press, $27.50; Carcanet £25.00.

[10] *The Caged Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill 1932-1940*. By WILLIAM MANCHESTER. Michael Joseph, £17.95.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE FORGOTTEN VICTOR

The Life of General Sir Richard O'Connor

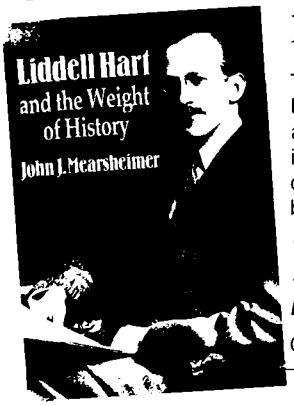
John Baynes

This is the first biography of one of the most remarkable senior commanders of the Second World War who, because of his own distaste for publicity, never did write his memoirs and is consequently less well-known than he should be. It covers the whole of O'Connor's distinguished career tracing his close association with leading military figures, most notably Montgomery.

0 08 036269 9 (H) October 1989 £17.50/US$31.50(approx)

"You, of course, had a most interesting, not to say glamorous, career during the war. I trust that one of these days you will publish your recollections."

Letter from
President Eisenhower to
General O'Connor
31 October 1966



LIDDELL HART AND THE WEIGHT OF HISTORY

John Mearsheimer

For over half a century Basil Liddell Hart developed a reputation as the foremost authority on strategy and military matters in the English-speaking world. Mearsheimer has now uncovered evidence implying that he manipulated facts to create a false impression of his role in the inter-war military debates and contends that his recommendations misled the British government into serious error between the wars.

"This is an important contribution to contemporary military writing and historical debate." Max Hastings

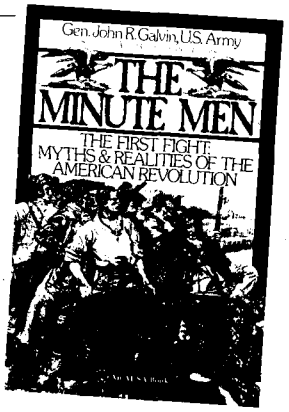
"...a fascinating study. It challenges too easily held assumptions, destroys old myths and sheds new light on old and current issues...a highly entertaining, readable account..." Henry Stanhope, The Times

0 08 036701 1 (H) February 1989 £15.95

THE MINUTE MEN

The First Fight: Myths and Realities of the American Revolution

General John R Galvin, U.S.Army, Supreme Allied Commander Europe



The Minute Men is the first book to show that the 'minute man' idea was a century and a half old at the start of the Revolution. General Galvin traces the Minute Men from the first colonists' preparations for defence against Indian attacks to the first battle with the British. The most exciting, as well as authoritative account of the Battle of Lexington and Concord ever written.

0 08 036733 X (H) *Pergamon-Brassey's* March 1989 £15.95/US$24.95

CHARIOTS OF THE DESERT

The Story of the Israeli Armoured Corps

David Eshel

Even before it existed as a constitutional fact, a beleaguered, new-born state was faced with the daunting prospect of war against armies well-equipped with modern weapons. Chariots of the Desert is the remarkable story, told through the author's own experiences and those of his comrades in arms, of the Israeli Armoured Corps and the crucial role it has played from its inception to the present day, to ensure that Israel has survived its many ordeals intact.

"...vivid, detailed account...a worthy tribute..." Field Marshal Lord Carver

0 08 036257 5 (H) March 1989 £16.95/US$24.95

National Security Strategy of the United States **By GEORGE BUSH**

This is the new White House Administration's eagerly awaited blueprint for America's role in the world. President Bush lays out his strategic objectives and explains the worldwide goals of the United States. Published immediately upon release by the White House.

0 08 036732 1 (H) *Pergamon-Brassey's* £9.50/US$14.95

COLD DAWN The Story of SALT

John Newhouse - Available again as a Pergamon-Brassey's Classic

"...unique and uniquely readable...an example of journalism at its best...What he has succeeded in doing is to put into clear and understandable political context many of the concerns and deliberations that went into reaching the first US-Soviet strategic arms limitations."

Meg Greenfield Washington Post

0 08 036736 4 (H) Apr 1989 *Pergamon-Brassey's* £16.50/US$26.00

Available from bookshops or by post from Brassey's, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford OX3 0BW, England. Tel:(0865)64881.
Pergamon-Brassey's, Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, New York 10523, USA. Tel:(914)592-7700. Prices subject to change without notice.

BRASSEY'S

Members of Maxwell Pergamon Publishing Corporation

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Churchill knew better. For him the Empire was manifestly on a "downward slurge". Two wars and their aftermath completed the process—not only for Britain, but also for France. There, the traumas of Indochina and Algeria produced the nationalist reflex known as Gaullism. In Britain, that reaction was muted—although the invasion of Anguilla and (some might argue) the Falklands War aroused Gaullist emotions.

ONLY ONCE, in the Suez crisis of 1956, did France and Britain combine in what, in retrospect, may be called a "Gaullist" operation, although it took place before the General's return to power.

So much has now been written on Suez that little new seems likely to emerge. Selwyn Lloyd, whose own book *Suez 1956* described his role in the Sèvres negotiations with the French and the Israelis somewhat guardedly, was in truth an intermediary rather than a prime mover in the affair. As D. R. Thorpe puts it in his new, deeply discerning, and exhaustively research biography"[11]:

> "The main victors, if such a word can be applied, were the Israelis and (paradoxically) the Egyptians. . . . The main losers were the British and the French. . . . The main domestic political consequence was that the Conservatives lost the intellectual vote, psychologically far more important than its numerical strength might suggest, for a generation."

Again, perhaps, a lesson for the United States.

[11] *Selwyn Lloyd*. By D. R. THORPE. Jonathan Cape, £16.00.

A Plague o' Both Your Houses

Shakespeareans in Conflict—By ERIC SAMS

HERE ARE the old guard and the avant-garde Shakespeareans, still locked in their perpetual conflict with each other and with everyone else in the professional field. To the lay onlooker, all these jarring factions stand on the wrong side. The writers under review are dons, or at least donnish. But teachers soon start to assume that whatever they keep on telling us must be true. Then their preconceptions typically take total precedence over fact and argument; so their contentions remain academic, which has come (for that very reason) to mean pointless.

Dr Rowse's *Shakespeare the Man*[1] is the least unreliable. As an historian, Rowse must show some deference to dates and documents; but he habitually chooses among and within them, to suit his own strong feelings. Thus the biographical testimony of John Aubrey, avowedly based on special enquiry among those connected with Shakespeare in Stratford and London, is treated with reasonable respect, if a shade patronisingly ("there is usually something in what Aubrey says"). This assessment, however, is set aside on the crucial question of Shakespeare's arrival in London, which Dr Rowse arbitrarily allots to "one fine day in the later 1580s". Aubrey's estimate of c. 1582 remains unmentioned; and that oversight may well have lost five formative years. Supporting evidence for an early start was also offered by Shakespeare's first detailed biographer, Nicholas Rowe (also after due enquiry); but he is not even named, let alone cited.

Again, we are told as a fact that the young Shakespeare was primarily an actor, although common sense and plain testimony alike insist that he was primarily a dramatic poet. Peter Levi, as so often, has in his *Life and Times of William Shakespeare*[2] an astute and arresting thought: he doubts that "Shakespeare started as an actor and nothing else . . . since he was certainly a talented writer and never became a famous actor". That approach is surely sound enough; but it leads only into the blind alley of personal opinion. Why not start from Aubrey's and Rowe's explicit assurances that the subject of their biographies, to whom they stand closer by three centuries, was a successful playwright soon after his early arrival in London?

DR ROWSE freely reinterprets the literary texts as well as the biographical evidence. Thus Sonnet 107, by which time Elizabeth I "hath her eclipse endured", is to be dated 1594 instead of the usual and "obvious"[3] 1603, when she died. So we are instructed that "endured" meant "come through" in Elizabethan English. This first begs the question by assuming an Elizabethan (i.e. pre-1603) date; then overlooks the far more famous counter-example of "men must endure their going hence", which they do not come through; and finally defies the readily verifiable fact that Shakespeare took the transitive verb to mean "bear, suffer, put up with" in all his other 90 usages, and "come through" in none of them. Again, Sonnet 86 must relate solely to Christopher Marlowe, so its past tenses must post-date his death in 1593, and "by spirits taught" must mean that he dabbled in spiritualism. "Nothing surprising" in that, says Dr Rowse. Sometimes the historian

[1] *Shakespeare the Man*. By A. L. ROWSE. Macmillan, £18.95.
[2] *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare*. By PETER LEVI. Macmillan, £16.95.
[3] See *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, edited by John Kerrigan (Penguin, 1986), p. 319: "on the basis of allusions" and "stylistic evidence".

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gets his dates definitely wrong, in contexts which invalidate his claim to have settled the chronology of the plays "once and for all". Thus his statement that *The Taming of the Shrew* was acted in 1594 is entirely groundless. So is his assertion that Francis Collins wrote Shakespeare's will.

The most egregious instance of such inventiveness is the positive and insistent identification of one Emilia Lanier, née Bassano, as the Dark Lady of the Sonnets. There is no trace of evidence that Shakespeare ever so much as set eyes on her, let alone made her his mistress and immortalised her. Why, for example, except as a matching accessory after the theory, must this daughter of Margaret Johnson have been "exceptionally dark", with "her own dark beauty", and indeed "extremely dark", with "raven-black eyes, black hair, eyebrows and eyelashes", or "raven-black hair and dark eyes"? Even her colouring is a pigment of the imagination, which is first promoted by Dr Rowse to an historical fact, and then hailed as "my original discovery".

SUCH BLOTS DISFIGURE what could and should have been the clearest of copybook biographies. They remain uneradicated after fifteen years available for second thoughts about this third edition. But Dr Rowse will be remembered for the strength of his main methodology rather than the weakness of its aberrations. As the 21st century will acknowledge, he has truly revolutionised Shakespeare scholarship by his robust rejection of once-fashionable authorities, such as the "imperceptive" E. K. Chambers and the "erratic" Dover Wilson, together with the "liberal intellectuals" who trade (in every sense) on outmoded and unevidenced opinion.

As soon as our modern editorial experts are challenged and cross-checked on Rowsean lines, their failings and follies become manifest. As Rowse has proved, the historico-logical approach by way of factual data is infinitely preferable. If he himself has gone too far, that is what pioneers are born and bound to do. What matters most is his right direction, which points the way forward for all future followers. His rational acceptance of Southampton as sonnet-recipient, for example, in accordance with the principle of economy in hypothesis, affords a firm foundation for chronology and critique. So does his equally crucial yet still neglected insistence on the close interlinkage between life and works: ". . . a real writer does not disguise himself" is his typically simple yet compelling formulation. In this context, his commentary on *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*[4] (the main new material in this revised edition) also has lasting value.

THOUGH A POET as well as an historian, Dr Rowse self-denyingly concentrates on the life of Shakespeare. As a poet and a Professor of Poetry, Peter Levi understandably concentrates on the works. He is thus even more closely committed to the unfashionable assumption that artists' personalities and characters can be inferred from their art. His tales from Shakespeare are far longer, if not taller, than Dr Rowse's, and their connection with the "Life and Times" of the title is often tenuous; but Levi's literary analyses and original researches are alike impressive. No finer intellect, scholarship, or poetic sensitivity has applied itself to Shakespeare biography in this century. As if in due acknowledgement, his book is not only longer and larger than Rowse's, but far better produced and illustrated; yet it comes from the same publisher at £2 less, which must be a bargain. It abounds in informed insights, including the best account since 1952[5] of Shakespeare's Ovidian and other classical sources and influences.

Levi's writing is unfailingly imaginative and poetical. So, unfortunately, is his reasoning, with an avowed subjectivism that teeters on the verge of the Narcissistic ("I incline to the view", and so forth), and sometimes falls headlong in the middle of its own reflections. The Introduction announces that "there can be no science of Shakespeare". But in some sense there can, should, and must be—as Dr Rowse rightly insists. Of course we are all entitled, if we wish, to vaunt our personal feelings over anyone else's arguments, and to say so, freely and firmly. But then we are writing our own biography, not Shakespeare's.

Besides, even Professor Levi agrees on the main axiom of scientific method: ". . . the facts . . . must be established as firmly as possible . . . one must not make up fantasies. . . ." Hardly are those words out when he starts making up fantasies. Thus his account of "the sort of inference one must exclude" contains a dozen mistakes and misstatements in its 20 lines, and results in a *a priori* exclusion of some perfectly sound and highly significant inferences about the date and history of *Hamlet*. The transcription of the manuscript that Levi attributes to Shakespeare on technical graphological grounds of letter-formation (such as "Marston's S and W") contains some 30 misreadings of letters, in two pages. His dating of *Henry VI*, crucial for his chronology ("which we can argue closely"), derives solely from a confusion between the Quarto and Folio texts. The bright insights and polished prose are too often tarnished, if not corroded, by such slackness, which extends as far as the inadequate index.

If only these two books could be made available in thoroughly-revised editions, their parallel and complementary approaches could together provide a much-needed definitive biography to replace the misleadingly negative scepticism of Samuel Schoenbaum, although his *William*

Work and family: The child care challenge
Conditions of Work Digest, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1988
Are industrialised countries responding to the needs of working parents? Examining this question, this volume provides information on international standards and policies, provisions in the national legislation of 31 countries, and describes what is being done to meet the challenge.
ISBN 92-2-106498-0 £17.60

The cost of social security. Twelfth international inquiry, 1981-1983. Comparative tables
Aiming first to establish a consolidated statement of financial operations on social security schemes existing in countries, the inquiry also provides an international comparison by determining trends and comparing cost distributions between different sources and types of schemes.
ISBN 92-2-006423-5 *(Trilingual)* £22.00

Access and Visa cards accepted

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE
Vincent House, Vincent Square
London SW1P 2NB. Tel.: 01-828 6401

[4] A. L. Rowse in *The Spectator*, 16 July 1983, p. 26.
[5] The publication date of J. A. K. Thomson's *Shakespeare and the Classics*.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shakespeare: A Documentary Life (1975) will remain an essential source for students because of its copious facsimile illustrations. As it is, their brilliant flashes of insight are so chequered with private obscurantism that one begins to yearn for the steady dimness of simple mediocrity.

THE VARIOUS CONTRIBUTORS TO *The Shakespeare Myth*[6] are at least consistent. None of them offers any serious study of any aspect of the life or the works. These pages are serenely untroubled by any detailed reference to any actual Tudor or Stuart date or thought. Their topic is contemporary cultural politics; their typical tone is instantly set by the editor's opening appeal to "those still fortunate enough, in Thatcher's Britain, to have access to a £20 note"—namely himself and his collaborators, if no one else. They are all Heads of Drama, Readers, Lecturers, or Course Leaders in Universities, Colleges, or Institutes (their capitals). They record their interviews with even fatter cats such as Sam Wanamaker and Jonathan Miller, who are shot at with loaded questions. The main contributors demonstrate, often very compellingly, how the Shakespeare industry interlocks with the capitalist ethos and the profit motive. Graham Holderness specialises in commerce and communications, David Margolies and Derek Longhurst in popular culture, Christopher McCullough and David Hornbrook in education, Simon Shepherd in homosexuality, and Ann Thompson in women and the family (using the word "feminist" some 30 times in her first three pages, in case we miss the point). John Drakakis dauntlessly defends the Southwark community, including its much-maligned road-sweepers, against unfeeling oppression by the power élite and pressure groups of the new Globe project. Alan Sinfield perceptively discusses recent British plays (by Stoppard, Marowitz, Bond and Wesker) related to Shakespeare texts.

These teachers passionately espouse their own "Shakespeare Myth" myth. It seems that his art has replaced religion as the opium of the people; so the workers need protection against his works and their use as weapons in the class war. The fiercest denouncer of bourgeois privilege is Terry Eagleton, Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, who openly deplores the way in which other literati "get where they are today". His dossier of actors and directors ominously records "the Reaganite Michael Caine" and the "bland Hampstead bohemianism" of Jonathan Miller. Terry Hands is caught out cravenly subscribing to "the Great Man theory of history"; Michael Croft even "rejects the whole notion of a popular theatre", like the populace itself. Eagleton's own writing is anything but demotic. He has far outgrown the working-class roots he describes, and nowadays talks fast and posh, like a real toff, with his "microtactics" and his "depoliticisings". I bet his old mates back in the buildings can't make him out. His weird polysyllabic jargon is shared by all these teachers of English throughout their University Press publication. Their discovery of a central contradiction within the capitalist system that employs them is surely revealing as well as convincing.

I fear, however, that they have all failed to draw the manifest inference from their own premises. If there is indeed an élitist Shakespeare conspiracy, they are part of it. They are its symptoms, not its cure. A truly radical approach would reject all academic attitudes to Shakespeare, including their own, and start again from the historical roots, with a materialist dialectic. The Bard would then emerge as an heroic peasant and worker in outright revolt against an oppressive squirearchy (Sir Thomas Lucy) and a tyrannical monarch (Elizabeth I). He was "for an age" in improving the lot of the labouring classes, including his own father, by personal benefaction; he is "for all time" in uniting the human race, internationally. The early texts published under his name, such as *Contention* and *True Tragedy* (c. 1590) would then take their rightful place in the canon and chronology. Their modish dismissal as "Bad Quartos", "piracies", and the like would be diagnosed as deriving from upper-class contempt for ordinary folk and their everyday activities and thought-processes. The élitist notion of the young Shakespeare as a highly-educated classicist and late developer, beginning his playwriting career at 27 with sophisticated comedies of high life, would be derided as blatant snobbery. Private profit would be identified as the main motive for keeping such nonsense in print, instead of withdrawing the standard editions for rewriting, or recycling.

THERE ARE indeed firm factual grounds[7] for such a reappraisal, which would be truly revolutionary. But it will no more come from the Left wing than from any other part of the airborne academic Pegasus, always more at home with its head in the clouds than its feet on the ground. On each of the rare occasions when *The Shakespeare Myth* takes a look at real life in the real world of the past—such as Holderness's casual glance at the deer-poaching "legend"—it supinely accepts the propaganda against which it ostensibly inveighs. What Ann Thompson calls her "hard-won expertise in Shakespeare studies" is notable for its slavish adherence to the male upper-class consensus about the dating, status, and sources of *The Taming of the Shrew*,[8] which is utterly misconceived. Peter Levi and A. L. Rowse, despite their own protestations of independence, also unquestioningly adopt orthodox academic assumptions (for example, about "late start" and "Bad Quarto" respectively) for which no trace of factual evidence has ever existed.

These teachers, right, left, and centre, simply cannot bring themselves to believe that much of what they have been taught, and are now themselves teaching, is totally and demonstrably untrue. The present position of Shakespeare studies is even more parlous than they suppose.

[6] *The Shakespeare Myth*. Edited by GRAHAM HOLDERNESS. Manchester University Press, £5.95.

[7] See, in ENCOUNTER, Eric Sams, "Where There's a Will . . . The Oxford or the Stratford Shakespeare?" (June 1987, pp. 54-57) and "Shakespeare, or Bottom? The Myth of 'Memorial Reconstruction'" (January 1989, pp. 41-45).

[8] See Eric Sams, "The Timing of the Shrews", *Notes and Queries*, vol. 32, no. 1 (March 1985), pp. 33-455 and vol. 33, no. 2 (June 1986), pp. 222-23.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books Encountered

William Plomer: A Biography. By PETER F. ALEXANDER. Oxford University Press, £25.00.

Meticulous, sad story of a good but not outstanding writer, his achievements as a novelist limited by inability, then, to admit publicly that he was gay. His 1925 South Africa novel *Turbott Wolfe*, his autobiographical *Double Lives*, and his macabre ballads will last. Will *Gloriana*, his Britten libretto? This Life will.

Napoleon III and his Carnival Empire. By JOHN BIERMAN. John Murray, £15.95.

Cheerful, journalistic account of the bewhiskered, power-seeking voluptuary of Haussmann's and Offenbach's Paris, enlivened in particular by the photographs that later correct but also surprisingly corroborate the paintings they supersede.

Deep Down: New Sensual Writing by Women. Edited by LAURA CHESTER. Faber, £12.95.

Seventy authors supply poems and prose pieces, some as long as short stories, others excerpts from novels: most are from the US and Canada. The best-known names are Margaret Atwood, Erica Jong, Joyce Carol Oates, Edna O'Brien, and Alice Walker. One section is lesbian: most are movingly, some rousingly, heterosexual.

Gilbert: The Man who was Chesterton. By MICHAEL COREN. Jonathan Cape, £12.95.

Sympathetic study, but adding little new to recent studies by John D. Coates and Michael Ffinch. Perhaps the trouble is that we have affectionate memories of early reading, but now find the mannerisms stale. Besides Father Brown, his books on Aquinas, Browning, Dickens, and Victorian literature are among those that stand up best.

Max Beerbohm and the Act of Writing. By LAWRENCE DANSON. Clarendon Press, £19.50.

Brilliant, untechnical, but profound study of the nature of parody, plagiarism, and the use of masks by the elusive Max. What could have been the breaking of a butterfly on a wheel becomes a diachronic dissection of minor art, stressing in particular the debt to Wilde. Twenty-four caricatures complete an elegant volume.

Essays by Divers Hands XLV. Edited by RICHARD FABER. Boydell & Brewer, £12.95.

Not exactly a selling title, but the Royal Society of Literature's "transactions" are too venerable to change. This volume includes Lord Quinton on P. G. Wodehouse, Terence de Vere White on "The Stage Irishman" (both fun), Anita Brookner on the Goncourts (full of new insight), and Laurence Lerner on "Literary Revolutions and Real Revolutions" (salutary).

Letters to Olga: June 1979 to September 1982. By VÁCLAV HAVEL. Translated by PAUL WILSON. Faber, £27.50.

144 letters, slightly shortened from the 1983 *samizdat* original, written by Havel to his wife once a week while in prison for involvement with Charter 77. Officially limited to "family matters", he in fact discusses books, plays, philosophy, his childhood, his beliefs and scepticism about ideology: a bubbling mind still free.

Twain's Heroes, Twain's Worlds. By ANDREW JAY HOFFMAN. University of Pennsylvania Press, $23.95, £19.50.

Learned, well-documented, and much at home with the critical literature, this study examines Huck Finn, the Yankee at King Arthur's court, and Pudd'nhead Wilson as "heroes"—the first two failing, because Huck could not free Jim and Hank could not transcend imperialistic industrialism, while Wilson is an existential hero in an absurd world.

In the Deep South. By ROY KERRIDGE. Michael Joseph, £14.95.

This marvellous book starts and almost ends with Mark Twain; but it takes in Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, and Arkansas as well as Mississippi and Louisiana: jazz, gospel-singing, gossip, justice and injustice. . . . It's all here, heard and watched by an acute, honest, friendly and witty Candide who misses nothing.

Toscanini's Fumble and Other Tales of Clinical Neurology. By HAROLD L. KLAWANS. The Bodley Head, £12.95.

Neurologist and novelist, Professor Klawans describes nearly a score of instances of surprising and usually temporary disorders, affecting numerous historical figures. Toscanini's lapse, during a live Wagner broadcast, now looks likely to have been due to conducting's having drawn blood away from the brain.

Son of Heaven: A Portrait of the Japanese Monarchy. By JERROLD M. PACKARD. Macdonald/Queen Anne Press, £14.95.

Published in the USA last year and unrevised for Hirohito's death, this is nevertheless a useful, thoughtful, and compendious history. On World War II, it concludes: "However much one may look for guile in [Hirohito's] actions, the evidence is that he was simply too trusting for his own and his country's good."

Speak Silence. By IDRIS PARRY. Carcanet, £16.95.

Five new and 23 reprinted essays by the former Professor of Modern German Literature at Manchester. The Germans looked at include Georg Büchner, Goethe, Günter Grass, Hermann Hesse, Kleist, Thomas Mann, and J. J. Winckelmann. A leisurely and personal collection, beckoning the layman with a welcoming smile.

An Industrialist in the Treasury: The Post-War Years. By EDWIN PLOWDEN. Foreword by ROY JENKINS. André Deutsch, £15.95.

A brilliant, profound, generous, and unduly modest account by the then Chief Planning Officer and adviser to Cripps, Gaitskell, and Butler of six crucial years in Britain's post-War history, 1947 to 1953, with shrewd and vivid portraits of all three and others, including Jean Monnet. Invaluable for future historians, and itself a delight to read.

The Road to Winchester. By JOHN THORN. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £14.95.

Another fascinating fragment of autobiography by an outstanding professional, this time the former headmaster of Winchester College, who steered it through the turbulence of recent changes in the manner, content, and context of education, which it discusses with candour, sympathy, and immense insight. A galloping read.

The Company of Critics: Social Criticism and Political Commitment in the Twentieth Century. By MICHAEL WALZER. Peter Halban, £15.95.

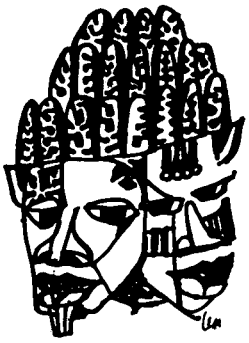
Sensible, dogged, and combative essays on various "critics of society", including Silone, Orwell, and Camus, but also Benda, Buber, Gramsci, Simone de Beauvoir, Marcuse, Foucault, and Breytenbach. Walzer argues for practical and morally sophisticated involvement, and against vote-the-ticket absolutism *à la* Sartre.

R.M.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

France in Africa

By David Perry



THE LOVE AFFAIR between France and French West Africa smoulders on, 30 years after Independence. Every day Jumbos touch down at Dakar and Abidjan laden with pre-cooked vacuum-packed bouillabaisse, crates of baguettes, and vintage champagne from Paris. At the big hotels, athletic Frenchmen play tennis deep into the afternoon (work seems to stop at 12 a.m. for the ex-pats), conversing easily with African ball-boys, while their wives tan themselves by mimosa-fringed swimming-pools. Sometimes the French seem to think of their bit of black Africa as some gigantic and exotic Club Mediterranée.

And the feeling is reciprocated, at least by the educated élite of Africans, for whom Paris seems almost fatally alluring. Elegant Senegalese and Guineans stroll as confidently through the *Quartier Latin* as they do through the streets of Dakar or Conakry, while their English-speaking counterparts from Nigeria or Ghana regard London as at best a necessary purgatory. There are good reasons for this mutual love affair.

In a vast slice of Africa with hundreds of languages and possibly thousands of dialects, none of which really predominates, French proved a useful *lingua franca* that soon became indispensable. Although in the 19th century many African chiefs were suspicious of offers of a French education, and sent their slaves to Paris to masquerade as their sons, it soon became clear what advantages mastery of French conferred. Next time round they got wise, and sent their real offspring. In 1881 King Peter of Mossu (in what is now Ivory Coast) sent his son to the *Lycée Louis Le Grand*, the most renowned school in Paris. From that time, the pattern was set.

An African who can master French and understand French culture is received with a genuine lack of prejudice in cultivated Parisian circles. There are many examples—the supreme one being Léopold Sédar Senghor, the former President of Senegal who divides his time between Dakar, Paris, and Normandy. The idea of "black Frenchmen" is more than just self-justifying waffle, and the French notion of assimilation seems impressively free from racism. But this apparent untaintedness is based on the premise that it is the beauty and clarity of the *French* language and the richess of *French* culture which transcend the barriers of colour.

In some ways English assumptions were more respectful of African culture, though more aloof and less susceptible to penetration by African élites. Politically, they led to the notion of indirect rule through existing chiefs and policies that originated in northern Nigeria. For anything analogous in the English colonial sphere to the sort of mutual esteem that exists between France and French West Africa, you would have to look to India—more precisely, to the north-western part of British India that is now Pakistan and Rajistan. Even then, it would be very different.

Certainly France has invested heavily in *la Francophonie*, to the point where many Africans wonder (and not all of them are radical firebrands) whether national integrity has not been compromised. Consider Yamoussoukro, Houphouet Boigny's brand new capital for the Ivory Coast, built at the President's birthplace. It resembles one of those French new towns—La Défense perhaps, with a touch of Godard's Alphaville and the high-tech superstructure of Charles de Gaulle airport: empty radial boulevards, ornamental lakes already clogged with algae, and huge auditoria that somehow contrive to caricature African dance into quaintness and African drama into boulevard comedy in funny clothes. French money, French design, Houphouet Boigny's delight.

Right next to the cavernous International Hotel there's a championship golf course which each year hosts the Ivory Coast Open. The prize money for this event is generous enough to ensure the presence of some middle-ranking golfers. And when the President hands out the rather garish trophy it's as if the economic viability of Ivory Coast and French Africa are being celebrated as much as any sporting victory. This success, if success it is, is also not without its French connection.

The West African Monetary Union was dreamt up by the French Treasury, and is underwritten by them. Every country in the region shares the same stable and exchangeable West African Franc—which means no black market, and no silly prices. (You know the sort of thing: "Yams are 50 centimes each but unfortunately they're not available.") The Union provides a secure and unchallenged market for French manufactured goods in Africa, and ensures that what France needs from these territories—coffee, peanut oil, uranium and bauxite—arrives in Paris without trouble.

When one country is in surplus (recently Niger with its uranium), it helps to subsidise others (currently drought-ridden Senegal). It seems like a brilliant French wheeze to prevent Paris having to pay out to help its *Famille Africaine*: neo-colonial exploitation or pragmatic North/South cooperation, depending on your point of view. Certainly the Union seems to work—even non-francophone countries like Guinea Bissau are knocking on the door trying to get admitted to this very French club.

THE IDEA of genuine independence from Paris in French West Africa sometimes seems stillborn, like Houphouet Boigny's Yamoussoukro. Take the controversial network of *conseillers techniques*—the French civil servants who work in Ministries all over French West Africa (usually in the office next to the Minister's). No policy decision is taken without their advice, and they are in constant contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Quai d'Orsay in Paris. For any Afri-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can who even thinks about things like national integrity, such clubbiness is embarrassing: it's hardly surprising that this part of Africa has not been a hotbed of radicalism. Those tennis-playing *conseillers* are insurance against that—at least until lunchtime. With their pre-tennis meal they will take a bottle of mineral water—some of the more adventurous may even essay *local* mineral water. But they need not worry too much. A bottle I came across bore the following legend: *"Mise en bouteilles avec l'assistance de Perrier, France."* It must be comforting to know that, however well things are going in French West Africa, crucial matters like the bottling of mineral water are still in the hands of the mother country.

THERE ARE NOTABLE and, it's tempting to think, noble exceptions to this rule of subservience to Paris. Guinea —under the mercurial leadership of Sekou Touré, the *méchant garçon* of the *Famille Africaine*—went its own way, dreamt up some radical economic policies, and developed its own currency (the aptly-named *syllie*). The result of breathing great lungfuls of African freedom, unpolluted by metropolitan France, is economic chaos and stagnation, virtual bankruptcy, and an airline whose operations are hampered by the fact that its only two Jumbos have been impounded in Europe for failure to pay landing fees.

The landlocked Sahelian country Burkina Fasso, under the charismatic Thomas Sankara, was also making increasingly radical noises. Large-scale land-redistribution programmes and powerful, troublesome unions were upsetting Paris. But what was worse—much worse—was Sankara's repeated statement (virtually treasonable in the circumstances) that French was the language of subservience and African shame. At the time of his assassination, the former Army captain was assiduously devouring *Teach Yourself English* tapes, flown in from London.

The economic and emotional commitment to Africa in Paris is puzzling when you consider the relative lack of importance of the territories which France acquired. They came out of the Conference of Berlin in 1884, with a tract of land that looks impressive on the map. But the territories were sparsely populated, difficult to administer (large tracts of desert and sahel scrub); and, economically, their potential was peanuts compared with Nigeria and Ghana—literally peanuts in the case of Senegal, which was to go crazy on this monoculture crop. But perhaps it was the very sense of having missed out at Berlin that motivated France to work so doggedly at assimilating what she had into her own culture.

These aspects of French policy are deplored by some Africans—and frankly welcomed by others, who feel nothing but relief that *la Francophonie* was so thoroughly innoculated against what they regard as the fatuous and bombastic rhetoric of pan-Africanism that swept the continent like a virus in the 1960s.

Arguably, though, there is more to this relationship than French economic commitment, or some lack of anti-colonial fire unique to this bit of West Africa. At a deeper level, then, something in the French habit of mind struck a chord in black Africa, while English ideas by-and-large seemed out of key.

The importance of rhetoric in intellectual and political life is widely recognised in France. This is something that was crucially shared by the developed polities of West Africa at the time of their colonial encounter, but for very different reasons.

In Africa, rhetoric was more than a flourish or a conceit; it was essential to the intellectual cohesion of societies where writing had little impact. There was neither the technology nor the desire to reproduce written material, and the leaf-parchment used for writing soon faded and perished in tropical or desert heat. Thus rhetoric became the tool by which ideas, rules, and traditions were rendered memorable and given meaning. These societies had a rigid sense of caste and order (which can be controversially interpreted as a sort of proto-apartheid), and this meant that the powers of highly-wrought indigenous rhetoric, in its political form, were clearly recognised by rulers and ruled alike.

It's not fanciful to suggest that the French language and tradition were so eagerly embraced in Africa partly because of this African emphasis on rhetoric in public life. "Never mind the message; listen to the rhetoric" seems to be a rule adhered to in French West Africa and France alike. When Sekou Touré led Guinea away from the embraces of the mother country, the rhetorical venom with which he excoriated France won him many admirers in Paris. It was rather like Charles de Gaulle and Albert Camus asking for the collaborationist essayist and film critic Robert Brasillach to be pardoned from execution because of his prose style.

Street life tells the same story. To see Africans speaking French with elaborate hand-gestures, and the sort of self-depreciating Yves Montand facial ironies that suit their features so well, is to see a culture where, as in France, conversation comes close to sport.

Consider this description by Bernard Zadi (a young Ivoirean dramatist who is considered a subversive by the powers-that-be in Abidjan) of his earliest memories of the rain forest where he grew up:

> "When I walk along a path and I hear the call of a bird, that has a meaning for me because that snatch of birdsong which I recognise can tell me if there's a snake nearby. This receptivity creates a sort of total communication so that things are understood intuitively. Nothing has been left out. Everything seems to have been observed and categorised. The world can be read like a network of permanent communications, and so the whole universe seems like some immense symphony."

It would be tempting to assume that Zadi's extraordinarily eloquent and poetic account owed at least something to the sort of structural anthropology that was fashionable in Paris in the 1960s. That relish for the exotic, and the emphasis on interconnecting sign-systems are reminiscent of Lévi-Strauss. And it's not unknown for the colonised to come to an understanding of their own culture through ideas originating with the colonisers. After all, Gandhi came to his philosophy of self-sufficiency and craft at least partly by reading Tolstoy and Ruskin.

BUT ZADI is different. A stocky, bullish figure, he is virtually self-taught, and has spent little or no time in Paris. He has arrived at a very Lévi-Straussian view of the forest—quite independently of Lévi-Strauss. And structuralism, as it took root in Paris, is by coincidence particularly well-suited to the

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

African sense of things. The emphasis on synchronic perspective which looks at elements in a system without regard to time was developed by Ferdinand de Saussure, and migrated from linguistics into anthropology. In Africa there was an essentially cyclical view of time, and the sense that, after "death", ancestors continued to live in a parallel world. Not surprisingly, many African philosophers who went to Paris to study found structuralism sympathetic and seductive. The methodology was mastered, and swiftly enlisted to argue a case fo the sophistication of indigenous African culture.

TAKE THE GREAT Cameroonian philosopher Marcien Towa. (Cameroon was not technically part of French West Africa, but Towa's allegiance is to France and he studied in Paris under Paul Ricoeur.) Towa has applied the Saussurean distinction between *language* and *people* (the linguistic system and the individual speech act) in the context of pre-literate Africa. He likes to refer to a poetic myth of the Dogon people of Mali to show how deceptively simple observations can cohere into a metaphysical paradigm of great significance.

> "When the world began, the sky was nearer to the earth and the young children used to play with the stars. Then when a woman was grinding millet she hurt the sky with the pole she was using to pound the millet. And so the sky got angry and it retreated further and further away, to where it is now."

The quintessential figure in this tale of two coinciding cultures is Léopold Senghor, poet and professor, President of Senegal for twenty years, and now the first ever African member of the *Academie Française*. Senghor completed his doctoral thesis on the poetry of Baudelaire and then turned to the *griots* of his native tradition, finding an African equivalent of the lyric power that had overwhelmed him as a young man.

This studious, bespectacled statesman, whose strength seems coiled up in his small body, has spoken of the battle that rages inside him between the French world in which he feels totally comfortable intellectually, and the African world to which his spirit and instincts belong. It's almost as if the complex of childhood memories of rural Senegal, its myth and its history, were excavated and brought alive for Senghor by the intellectual tools that he acquired in Paris.

This is exemplified by his flat in the Opéra district of Paris. It looks like an interior by Boucher. Smells of traditional French cooking trail in from the kitchen. But the Boucher furnishings set off a spectacular collection of African sculpture and traditional instruments which glow darkly against the pale silks. And Senghor's poetry is forever suspended between the urbane world of the *sixième arrondissement* and the burning landscapes of Africa.

His romantic dream is of a world culture based on what he calls *métissage*, in which each race contributes its own talent to the glorious whole. (Senghor even founded a university on the island of Gorée, off Dakar, to research these ideas.) However, the fascination of *métissage* does not lie in its content, which seems increasingly fanciful and dated, but in the way in which it bears witness to the extraordinary mutual penetration of the French and African habits of mind.

AUTHORS

Penelope Bennett's work has appeared in many publications, including *Harpers & Queen, Atlantic Monthly*, and *Nimbus*. She has recently completed a collection of short stories, and a novel.

Michael Hulse's most recent collection of poems is *Propaganda* (Secker & Warburg, 1985). His last contribution to ENCOUNTER was "Final Belief" (September-October 1988), an article on Rainer Maria Rilke.

D. C. Stove is a lecturer in the Department of Traditional and Modern Philosophy at the University of Sydney, and author of several works including *Popper and After* (1982) and *Rationality of Induction* (1986). A collection of his essays, *Cole Porter and Karl Popper, and other Reputations Re-Considered*, is to be published this year by Bradford Books/MIT Press.

Dan Pinck was an administrator at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a researcher at Harvard University, and is now a consultant to architects. His last article for ENCOUNTER was "Getting to Mrs Nestor's Farm" (July-August 1988), relating his experiences as a secret agent in Wartime China.

Robert Cecil was in the Diplomatic Service (1936-67) and during World War II was one of the personal assistants of "C", the head of SIS (1943-45). In recent years he has taught at Reading University and was Chairman of the Graduate School of Contemporary European Studies (1976-78). His most recent book is *Divided Life: A Biography of Donald Maclean* (Bodley Head, 1988).

Max Beloff, Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration, University of Oxford, from 1957-74, and Principal of the University College at Buckingham, 1974-79, was created a life peer in 1981.

Kenneth Minogue is Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics. His articles for ENCOUNTER include "The Idea of Liberty & the Dream of Liberation" (July-August 1987) and "The Preoccupation with Equality" (November 1988).

Gillian Tindall is a novelist, biographer, and historian. Her published work includes *City of Gold* (1982), about Bombay; *The Born Exile* (1974), a biography of George Gissing; and *Rosamund Lehmann: An Appreciation* (1985). Her latest novel, *Give Them All My Love*, is to be published in April by Hutchinson.

Richard Mayne, Co-editor of ENCOUNTER, is the author, among other works, of *The Recovery of Europe* (Weidenfeld and Harper & Row, 1970), and *Postwar* (Thames and Hudson, 1983). He has recently completed a study called *The Pioneers: A History of Federal Union.*

Eric Sams writes on music and on historical cipher and shorthand, as well as on Shakespeare. *Shakespeare's Lost Play: Edmund Ironside* was published in 1986 by Junction Books and Wildwood House; *Edward III* is in preparation.

David Perry is a producer for BBC Radio 3. He has travelled extensively in Africa and Asia.

Melvin J. Lasky, Co-editor of ENCOUNTER since 1958, is currently on sabbatical in Berlin. His books include *Africa for Beginners* (1962), *Utopia and Revolution* (1976) and *On the Barricades, & Off,* a collection of his ENCOUNTER essays (Transaction Books, 1988).

Malcolm Rutherford is Assistant Editor of the *Financial Times*.

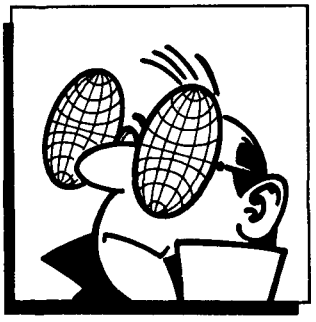
PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EAST & WEST

Berlin Notebook

By Melvin J. Lasky

Son of Perfect Spy



IT IS, under the well-known circumstances, highly unlikely—but just suppose that Guy Burgess had a son in King's College, Cambridge, and when his father's faithful services to Stalin earned the family a place in the Russian priviligentsia, he followed him to study in Moscow. Or, even more implausibly, Sir Anthony Blunt's daughter ran away from the Courtauld-Warburg Institute to become something like the Keeper of the Czar's pictures in the Leningrad Hermitage Museum.

Let me try again. The scenario now reads: George Blake, ingenious *KGB* spy inside MI6, breaks out of his British jail and signals his offspring to follow on to a safe, progressive, and altogether idealistic life in the expatriate Eastern camp.

If you won't believe that, you won't believe anything.

For Günther Guillaume did have a son, proud of a father who turned out to be one of the most extraordinary spies of post-War history (and even of earlier times: what great state secrets did Mata Hari transmit?). He worked in the German Chancellor's back room, processing confidential documents, and his wife worked in the front office, close to all the covert means of arranging a discreet pick-up. Their son was going to a good school in West Germany, earning his *Abitur*. Then *Mammi und Pappi* came under suspicion, were exposed, arrested (in April 1974), put on trial, and sentenced to long prison-terms. Both had reached the inner circles of the Prime Minister's office, with ludicrously free access to the topmost secret messages from NATO, the White House, 10 Downing Street, not to mention the local Bonn politicians planning high policy towards Moscow, East Berlin, and other inquisitive foreign headquarters.

Guillaume's exposure led immediately to the fall of *Bundeskanzler* Willy Brandt. The embarrassment was acute, for when in the history of espionage had a secret agent wormed himself into the very highest place? Richard Sorge got his hands on some vital pieces of information, as did the Rosenbergs and Klaus Fuchs, not to forget Alger Hiss and Pontecorvo; but they were all in the outer reaches of the power structure. Not even in the novels of John Le Carré or Len Deighton did the outrageous plotting go so far as to cast the private secretary to Number One as the micro-dotting, mail-dropping, minicamera-toting spy for the enemy.

I was told the story, by way of off-the-record explanation, that the spy's vaunted Teutonic efficiency and dispatch had been his own undoing. While on his Scandinavian holiday, Chancellor Brandt had relied on Guillaume to deal with the urgent top-secret messages from Bonn, Brussels, and Washington. One important US military message (which had been transmitted en route in code from *Air Force One*) had to do with the President's attitude towards certain controversial NATO-Alliance issues. Guillaume, via his wife, faithful spouse and secretary, was able quickly to send the contents from Oslo along his own secret-service line to Pankow and Moscow. Thereupon, a well-placed Western agent in the East communicated post-haste to Washington that this particular secret was out of the bag—even before *Air Force One* had landed back from the Brussels NATO headquarters in Washington, D.C. Which, *Q.E.D.*, indicated a leak from Brandt's holiday staff in Norway. Günther Guillaume, long under some vague suspicion (as a "political plant" among the refugees who had, in the 1950s, been streaming Westwards), was pinpointed, caught, finished.

At the time I flew to Bonn to console my old friend Willy Brandt, bewildered, crestfallen, looking for a small office in the *Bundestag* building and also for a new (or any old) purpose in life. I helped Egon Bahr move Willy's extra-large desk into the small assigned quarters. I also gave him some injudicious advice which I have regretted ever since, but which he translated into a dramatic comeback to the world-political scene (namely, my cheer-leading injunction to get up off the floor and take on the leadership of the almost-defunct socialist Second International and become the Bebel or Kautsky or Jean Jaurès *de nos jours* . . .).

BUT BACK TO the Son of Spy. His name is Pierre Guillaume, and after 13 years in the East he has "chosen freedom". He now lives in West Germany, is trying to pick up the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle of his life, and has turned his back on the ideals of his father and all he stood for: the perfect spy who came in from the cold war. I have been reading about him, and listening to him, and I wonder whether Guy Burgess's "Sebastian" or Sir Anthony Blunt's "Sarah" might have told the same story.

Pierre was born in Frankfurt-am-Main in 1957, some years after Günther Guillaume had "fled" as a "political refugee" from Ulbricht's Stalinist régime in Eastern Germany. He grew up in the *Bundesrepublik*, and when he was 18—his father and mother both in jail for espionage and treason—he was given refuge on the other side. Germans may be slow and systematic, but the intermezzo lasted only 13 years before young Guillaume decided to return to the West. Among other things he never succeeded, as he says, in feeling *"heimisch"*. As we all know from that extended exercise in Teutonic sentimentalism, the 14-hour long TV-series *Heimat*, the Germans have some complicated, spiritual difficulties with their notions of what is *home* and their *native land*. Many of my West German friends go on regular tours to the "more German" East to rediscover the "old and essential *Deutschtum*". But innumer-

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

able East Germans, when faced with the question of which of the two Germanies that have grown up on each side of the post-War Iron Curtain is the more real, true, characteristic, *das Ding an sich*, would choose—and physically so, if the Wall, and the trip-wire, and the watch-towers were not there—the least characteristic of German ideals: "freedom". So did Pierre Guillaume.

As simple as that? Not quite. He didn't warm up to the East, while still remaining cool to the West. At first, there was the boyhood shock of police at the door of the house in Bonn, and his parents being spirited away. He knew nothing of what had been going on. He had to swallow hard before believing that the ugly charges of betrayal, lying, cheating, stealing, informing, were true. After all, his father knew when the doorbell rang at 6.32 a.m., that Bonn morning in April 1974, that the the jig was up – and he promptly identified himself to the West German police as an officer in the East German *Volksarmee* and wanted to be treated accordingly, with respect for his rank and honour.

Politically, too, there was a measure of youthful embarrassment. Pierre was a follower of Willy Brandt, a Left-wing school-boy enthusiast. His father, though, was in the Social Democrat "Establishment" and thus a Right-winger. Now he turned out to be a true and loyal Communist, overtaking his son overnight on the ideological Left. Still, the personal contact was unbroken, and Pierre often, over the years, came to the West to visit his parents in prison.

AFTER SEVEN years, in one of those periodical frontier melodramas, spies were mutually exchanged, and the Guillaumes were returned whence they came. The son knew that he had been privileged, but when his father was given a hero's welcome in the *DDR*, he had another homely problem about his being part of yet another German Establishment. He had been living comfortably enough, for a student: a flat of his own, all the records and electronic equipment he could wish for, a generous stipend. Now, with the return of his notorious father, he was the son of a star. Günther Guillaume made speeches, was fêted everywhere, wined and dined, given flowers, as if he had flown through space and landed on the moon; and he had. The Party and the Proletariat were proud of him. The State Security Services chief (General Mischa Wolf) passed on the highest praise in the *KGB* world—he was a "genuine *Chekist*. . . ." He told his story over and over again, about toppling the West German *Bundeskanzler*, serving the cause of peace and progress on behalf of the true Republic of the Workers and Peasants. The functionaries applauded, the local newspapers were full of him.

THE BOY grew increasingly unhappy. He began to suspect that his father was actually a *conservative*. In the *DDR*'s Stalinised Establishment, Gorbachov was seen as an upstart, his Soviet-type reforms rejected; Pierre almost felt that he was back in reactionary Bonn with its stuffy dismissal of the youthful demands of '68. As a journalist and photographer he was running up and down the country, snapping at realities: change had to happen. But his father and the *Apparat* to which he belonged were reluctant to risk anything, desperate to hold on to what they had. As for himself, he knew that half the difficulty was the officious censorship, but the other half was the inner censor which had been compromising his work. He was looking over his shoulder, just as his editors were constantly calling up the *ZK*, the Central Committee in East Berlin, and asking for instructions from the still all-important "Agitation/Propaganda Department". He was a member of the Party, the *SED*, and grew more and more ashamed of the little economic advantages he enjoyed (if the essential principle was "better shopping" he could have remained in the great Western supermarket). But the privileged shoppers in the East were a tiny parasitic élite, and the new Gorbachov principles of democratisation, openness, and reconstruction didn't interest them. Heretical and subversive items of Russian muck-raking began to be forbidden by the East German censors. A magazine like *Sputnik* was officially stopped; copies of the *Moscow News* were simply not available.

PIERRE WAS over 30 now, and felt himself an outsider within his generation in the *DDR*. As he said:

> ". . . the middle cadres of the régime, around 40, just couldn't deal with a new reforming spirit, with criticism and ideas of change. One couldn't talk to them about the real joy of discussing things openly and freely, of arguing out differences of opinion, of taking up a reasonable and elementary democratic attitude. They had been formed by 40 years of East German Party life, and in their early years, from the beginning in the Pioneers through their entire Marxist-Leninist schooling, they never had to confront the idea of 'liberty'. Indeed they had *Angst*, being anxious and fearful of others and even of themselves. . . . In general only Western television introduced a measure of dissidence into his stolid East German mass. . . ."

But was he himself, then, a dissident? No, alas, not at all, for he was running away, and a real dissident has to remain and resist. He admires those who have the strength and inner resourcefulness to continue the fight; but he was not "one of them". He was an East German citizen, with privileges, for 13 years; and even as the son of a national hero he still felt himself to be "a stranger *(ein Fremder)*". He was the young fellow who came "from the West", and he realised that in a divided Germany his true roots were "*there*, not *here* . . . even as my hopes grew smaller and smaller, and my disappointments expanded. . . ." His "class"—the so-called New Class to which his father and his cronies belonged—was actually cut off from the lives of the ordinary people, their problems and concerns, and (blithely ignorant of actual social conditions of the country) they ruled with an arrogant, dogmatic hand.

It was the ultimate humiliation that "the masses" wanted to leave the East German satellite state that prided itself (in the craven phrase of one *DDR* writer who now composes in the West) on being "the better Germany". Almost a million *DDR* citizens summoned up enough courage to put in official applications for an exit visa. Pierre Guillaume was one of them,

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and—perhaps with the influence of his father—they let him out.

He is now in the West again, a middle-aged refugee with wife and family; and, if there is anything certain in this world, he will not be following in the red-velvet footsteps of his father, private secretary to a Western Chancellor and public hero of the Eastern revolution which promised that life would be better "for the children and the children's children".

Brother, Can You Spare a Crime?

JUST BACK from Rome, Luigi M. tells me of the international conference of jurists, considering the modernisation of Italian criminal law, and how it was put to an exemplary test by an "experiment" in Venice. A mock-trial was held there in which Cain was indicted on charges of murdering his brother Abel, and then on the final appeal was "acquitted".

A group of Venetian judges, lawyers, and Biblical experts held a one-day session in which all the evidence was reviewed in the case of what has been traditionally accepted as "the first homicide".

The legal argumentation was conducted according to the new Italian laws governing criminal trials. Modern psychological theories also played a leading role, for Cain was considered to have something called psychological extenuating circumstances—wasn't he an impulsive youth? and didn't bad character only emerge in a moment of excitement? The facts, including much of what was hearsay, were all recorded in the first *Book of Moses*, chapter 4, verse 3. But could this really be considered a proper protocol? Cain may or may not have been his "brother's keeper", according to divine law; but this-worldly law dictates the search for the weapon, and there was no evidence of that. (Albrecht Dürer's 1511 sketch *The murder with an axe* [see vignette] was judged to be *ex post facto* and therefore immaterial and irrelevant.)

ADDITIONAL testimony was heard from anthropologists (on the "primitive tribal culture" of the day), rabbis (on certain Talmudic ambiguities), criminologists (was there an actual confession?), philologists (was God's judgment correct even in terms of the Lord's law?), and psychoanalysts (doesn't fratricide have deep roots in the libido?).

Cain's lawyers argued a case for self-defence, involving the violation of his civil rights as a first-born son—for this was not really a murder case, but a trial of "a human being . . . a man . . . *ecce homo*. . . ." He was acquitted by a vote of the Supreme Court five-to-four.

Of "De-" & "Re-"Habilitation

IT TURNS OUT TO BE a two-way street, this Moscow business of "rehabilitation". We had a recent article about why and how the Bolsheviks in the Kremlin (or what's left of them) rehabilitated Nikolai Bukharin, whom Stalin had condemned in the "Show Trials" of the 1930s. (See Bohdan Nahaylo, "The Case of Nikolai Bukharin", January 1989.) Not a few of those killed as "fascists" or "Nazi-Trotskyite wreckers"—among them Radek and Kamenev, *et al.*—have also been deemed innocent by the "Rehabilitation Commission" of the Soviet Communist Party and said to have been wrongly put down.

But what is the word for the opposite—"dehabilitation"? Our document in ENCOUNTER ("Why Did Romain Rolland Remain Silent?", June 1988) suggests that what goes up can also go down. Romain Rolland is being bitterly reconsidered. Was he really a great pro-Soviet friend of the Russian people? Quite the contrary. Now it appears that he was a friend of the tyrant and his tyranny, and he was only praising the evil man and his evil ways during the great tribulations of the long-suffering people. He had a smile for Stalin and his ilk, but no tears for the oppressed masses, who were exploited, terrorised, and decimated.

Now it is the turn of Lion Feuchtwanger. In my own article on "The Cycles of Western Fantasy" (ENCOUNTER, February 1988) I mentioned Feuchtwanger's notoriety as one of the influential phantasisers of the 1930s, and quoted from his book *Moskau 1937* about how happy and contented everybody was. Just as there were premature anti-fascists and premature anti-Stalinists, we are now among the premature "dehabilitationists"! For I find in the recent German edition of the *Moscow News* (No. 12, December 1988, p. 18) a full-page article taking pity on the famous German writer for his illusions and self-deceptions. The *Moscow News* reprints, wickedly, its own published photograph of January 1937 which shows a thoughtful bespectacled Feuchtwanger sitting in the Kremlin next to a twinkle-eyed self-satisfied Joseph Stalin. The *Moscow News* article (by Albert Plutnik) tries to do an analysis-in-depth of how an honest writer could write so dishonestly of a vile, murderous, hateful régime. (The brief answer: he hated the régime of Hitler even more, and forced himself to accept and befriend "the lesser evil".)

HOW MAN more are waiting in the queues of the great ideological beyond for their just deserts? Perhaps the "Red Dean" of Canterbury, Dr Hewlett Johnson? Or poor Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who many well be charged by the latter-day honest Archivists of the Revolution with having been "crooked, wicked, perverse scholars in Soviet affairs", for they hailed a "new civilisation" when they should have been reviling a horrific barbarism. The American friend of the Stalinist régime, Corliss Lamont, may soon come in for "dehabilitation"—he also wrote paeans of praise for the ruling class, now called the *Nomenklatura*, and had no time for the little people.

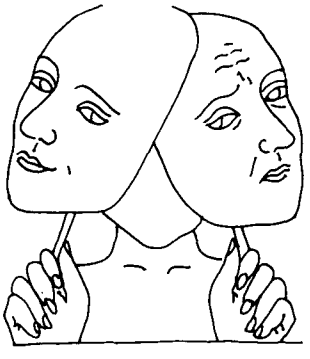
Things have gone so far—"degenerated" may not be too strong a word for it—that the old friends of the "worker's

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paradise", the tried-and-true Moscow colony of foreign fellow-travellers and displaced spies who had emigrated, or fled, to take their honoured places in Stalinist Russia, now feel humiliated, degraded, robbed of their ideological dignity. One famous English writer, according to a Moscow report (*Moscow News*, No. 2, February 1989), has now resigned from the British-Soviet Friendship Society because, evidently, it has become so unfriendly. He objects to the dissemination of certain Moscow newspapers and magazines; clearly the Russian counter-attacks on the myths of yesterday have become intolerable for yesterday's mythologists. Criticise your enemies, yes—but your still faithful friends? As the famed pro-Soviet novelist James Aldridge (*Signed With Their Honour*, etc.) put it, "It appears that those who were your life-long defenders were in the wrong, and in the right were those anti-Soviet propagandists now acclaimed to be the tellers of truths. . . ." A bewildering and alarming turn of events—is Aldridge also on somebody's little list?

The experts in Moscow who busy themselves with "Rehabilitation"—it is a whole department, run by a Politburo big wig named Solomentov—might create a new sub-department, with a fine and sensitive feeling for its dialectical opposite. It might well begin by studying the index of Eugene Lyons' invaluable guide to *The Red Decade* (1942) and Paul Hollander's scholarly *Political Pilgrims* (1981) for additional "phantasisers" among the Western fellow-travellers whose pro-Russian illusions and propaganda bordered on criminal mendacity. Which is what we always knew. But nowadays it stands condemned in Moscow, in the irony of ironies, as a reprehensible disservice to the Russian people.

Towards a Negative Cultural Tax



FOR YEARS NOW I have not been able to walk into any theatre or opera house without fear and trembling. What outrageous feat of transubstantiation would be perpetrated tonight? Characters get transmogrified, centuries (and even millennia) get displaced, gentle romantic melodies become militant war chants, ancient gods become bourgeois bosses, scenes of classical dramaturgy get inter-cut like the broken montage in a television mini-series.

The other day one talented German theatre director put on a new production of *Macbeth*. It was happening in, of all places, Viet Nam. Saigon, of course, lost; but Shakespeare and Verdi even more. Actors ran around in camouflaged boiler-suits, corpses in the chorus were air-lifted from the battlefield by whirling, roaring helicopters; the stage was strewn with empty Coca-Cola cans and crushed Lucky Strike cigarette packets. Macbeth faces his fate, looking out through glinting dark glasses; and he and Macduff play Russian roulette, squeezing triggers, instead of "laying on" until one cries "Hold, enough!"

The first-night audience, as a newspaper critic wrote the next day, was converted into a "bawling, brawling mob" by the provocations of a *Regisseur* called Günther Krämer, until the conductor mounted the stage and begged for "respect for the singers". And a heckler cried, "But they can't even sing! . . ."

And be these juggling fiends no more believ'd
That palter with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. (MACBETH, Oxford ed., V. vii.48)

In London, as I recall, this kind of fiendish thing is more politely received. In the Coliseum, at the English National Opera's production of Rossini's *Moses* the year before last, I seemed to be the only one in the audience groaning and moaning audibly at the proceedings. The arias were sung against the background of blown-up photographs (Johannesburg riots, Belfast terrorists) and poster-size "relevant" quotations (Menachem Begin, Nelson Mandela). The Mosaic liberation in the promised land was converted into some kind of guerrilla warfare, with the children of Israel taking their Kalashnikovs (from under their ragged biblical robes) to shoot it out with the Egyptians (in smoked spectacles and grey double-breasted suits).

THE GERMANS order these things better; that is to say, with less simple-minded political naivety and more absurd metaphysical complications. The new Viennese version of *The Merchant of Venice* is Peter Zadek's third neo-German attempt to do justice to Shakespeare's anti-Semitism. Himself a Jew (and a returned émigré from England), he seems to be obsessed with the idea that it is wrong for the Germans not to be willing to play Shylock for the unmitigated villain he is. (Indeed Zadek defended Rainer Maria Fassbinder's scandalising German play about the character—a Jew, of course—who was responsible for most of the current evil on Frankfurt's city-streets.) I once saw in Berlin that fine actor Ernst Deutsch portray Shylock in the first post-War performance of *The Merchant*; he played as if he were a cross between Nathan the Wise and Moses Maimonides; and Zadek won't have any of this nobility, this hypocrisy, at all.

But perhaps Shakespeare's Elizabethanism has been getting in the way of the clear contemporary message that evidently cries out to be conveyed. So Peter Zadek transforms the story into the Merchant of Wall Street. It all takes place in skyscrapers like Manhattan's Trump Tower. A youthful Shylock reads the *Wall Street Journal*, does his money calculations on a mini-computer, wears fashionable Dior shirts, carries his commercial documents in an attaché case, and takes calls on his cordless telephone. If he impressed one German reviewer as being the "coolest" character in all the Bard's work, he is nevertheless leading—ever universal, always relevant—the stormy wave of current resentment against "the Yuppies". Into the bonfire of vanities with them all! In the new translation which Peter Zadek commissioned, the jokes are "in", the puns are "right on", not all of them redeemed by snappy delivery on the part of clever actors in pin-striped

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suits, revealing in shirt-sleeved moments the broad yellow suspenders that mark brokerage-*chic*. (I thought: is there anything so baleful as ingenuity when its genius takes a wrong turn?)

By the time I got to *The Ring of the Nibelungen* at the Deutsche Opera, I was prepared for anything; but Goetz Friedrich's *Siegfried*, to listen to it, is almost conventional Wagner. True, there are no longer any spears and helmets, and the Fafner monster which our hero strikes dead looks (from where I sat) more like a Mark VI-*Panzer* left over in the surrealistic ruins of the next World War. Still, Mime forges the magic sword in a credible smithy's fire, and Siegfried follows the song of the Woodbird like the melodic country boy he is said to be. Wotan the Wanderer wanders through the painted scenery believably.

Could it have been as old-fashioned as it seemed and sounded? Was there no secret message between the chords of the recurrent motifs? How could the furies of modernism—or, rather, modernisation—have stopped short of this stage? They didn't. I soon discovered the hidden meanings as disclosed in the official "Diary Notes" of the production which will soon be leaving Berlin and going around the world; and I append here a few extracts for the benefit of ultimate clarification and for those, apart from Bernard Levin, who are interested in the authentic de-structural explication of the text.

In Wagner's first act, in the scene between Wotan and Mime, we have to understand that the latter is like *"Ein kaisertreuer Sozialdemokrat im Marschtempo"* (which is supposed to suggest, if you can bear it, old social democrats in loyal goose-steps for their Kaiser). As the plot thickens the woodland woodwinds are to hint at "an androgynous bird-form as in Chagall" and Mime becomes, before the curtain, a kind of "modern psychopath". As the producer tellingly remarks: "Isolated intellectuals become childish. . . ." Even worse, it is in such moments (as Goetz Friedrich himself instructs us) that "these kind of people invent the H-Bomb"!

Siegfried presents similar problems that we knew not of. "Don't discredit him as a Nazi, he is no blond beast!"—although he does have a bit of "a Super-Man touch". But then he is intended to be, in the last analysis (after entrancing Wagnerian hours), *also* a bit of an "anti-Hero". Altogether there must be an element of *Heimat*-drama to it all, an echo of "émigrés" and exile. In the second act the plot should constrict to a point "where it is worse than Ibsen. . . ." Evidently worse also than in Marx, because it must add up to the thesis that the "classical class struggle is outlived".

As for the monster scene with Fafner, I was right after all, catching on with my first guess. The production diary reveals that the evil "worm" is actually "a *Panzer* with a crazy colonel who has survived World War III".

If you were puzzled afterwards by bits in the second half of the second act, you will be reassured to know that "the whole scene is the quintessence of Absurd Theatre—a hundred years before Ionesco and Dürrenmatt. . . ." More than that, Siegfried, in killing Mime by sheer accident, shows himself to be at heart something of "a Pacifist". Nevertheless, when Siegfried approaches the cliffs of the *Walkyrie* he has to move like the US Navy's "Astronauts who first landed on the moon".

And if you find this psychologically chaotic, it goes back to the fact that Wagner was writing "a model psychoanalytical drama". Sexy Brunnhilde remembers what happened to "the Olympian Call-Girls". Siegfried, recalling his mother, has taken "an embryonic position" (I missed this one completely in the semi-darkness). But then, as in his battle with the mad colonel of World War III, he is quite capable of scoring a hit "at the very centre of *Angst*".

Much Nordic nonsense spooked around in the recesses of Wagner's fertile brain, but nothing compared to the strange brew in which musical drama is cooked these days. *Götterdämmerung*, the next afternoon, would seem to present no additional problems, except to keep the soap-opera flakes stirring in the pot. And so we have in the *Vorspiel*, where Siegfried takes his farewell of Brunnhilde, joy and sadness mixed but something more too: "as if the next Coca-Cola could contain poison. . . ." That sense of sinister pollution carries even into Act III, Scene 1, when the Rhine Maidens swimmingly return: but almost lifelessly, with difficult movements, as if they were sick, polluted fish in the North Sea.

But I am getting ahead of myself. In the great Gibichung castle Siegfried must arrive "like Tarzan breaking into the big city. . . ." Then, of course, Gunther—who is, after all, at home—can "behave himself as an English Lord, intolerably aristocratic". So it follows that Gutrune would be "playing Lady Di"

If you think that this is rather a complicated family situation even for Wagnerian gods, we have to realise that the whole atmosphere is suffused with "a hatefulness rather like in *Dallas* or in *Dynasty*" (known to the German TV millions as the Denver Clan). In the second scene of Act III, when Siegfried gets into some trouble, the atmosphere worsens to "that of the Ku Klux Klan", and this might be in some way connected to the atmosphere a few scenes earlier in which Siegfried feels displaced as "a woodsman in Wall Street" or "Dustin Hoffman as 'Midnight Cowboy'. . . ." At any rate the tension is altogether supposed to be that of Alfred Hitchcock's "psycho-thrillers" and when emotion touches horror it shifts rapidly to "Jack Nicholson flying over the cuckoo's nest".

If we have got it all correctly, and down to the last subtle innuendo, we might as well have gone to the movies.

Wagner, I seem to recall, once said that he wanted to emigrate to America, to the Wild West, possibly to California; and who knows whether, in our era of modernising sensibility, it might legitimate this kind of Hollywoodisation of *The Ring*. One scene between Siegfried and Brunnhilde (Gwynneth Jones: magnificent in this role, but clad in tight punk leather) is, as Goetz Friedrich guides us, supposed to be "like a Hollywood directors", and the business of dragons and dwarfs is supposed to be something out of "Disneyland".

Still, Berlin is, in the end, where it's all at; and the realities around us (circumscribed by 114 miles of a Stalinist wall) can't

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

simply be ignored. I was almost relieved to note on the last page of the Berlin Opera House's "production diary" that those two arch-villains Alberich and his son Hagen, slouching around the stage and noisily plotting their conspiracy and revenge, were compared to nobody less than "a Trotsky in exile". No matter that this is more the "reality" of East Berlin (where Stalin is still a worthy and Trotsky still a wrecker) than of West Berlin (where Gorbachov's truth-telling, even about Trotsky, circulates freely). After all, we're fast friends now; good walls make good neighbours.

FAR BE IT for me to propose moving the clocks back to the days when Hamlet had more to do with Hecuba than with Hitchcock, and the Nibelungen more to do with the Norsemen than the nattering nabobs of neo-modernism. But if the reader can bear with a modest proposal it might look like this.

"A Fund for Contemporaneity", dedicated to the defence of time and place and atmosphere, might be administered by a European Arts Council (British delegates: Lord Annan, Lord Quinton, Lord Beloff), and it would use for appropriate cultural charity all monies which the cash penalties hereunder specified cause to flow into its coffers.

If Jonathan Miller wants (and he wanted, so badly) to stage *The Merchant of Venice* in 19th-century Manchester—with Shylock pacing the Midlands *Bourse* in a long coat and shiny top hat—he can certainly get on with it. But for the copyright permission to circumvent, or indeed violate, the classic text so extravagantly, two fines would have to be paid. First, 1% of theatre takings, or a flat royalty (whichever is the greater), for the *geographical* misdemeanour, calculated on the number of miles or kilometres between the original and the displacement (in this case, between Venice and Manchester, roughly 1,800 miles as the crow flies). Secondly, for the *chronological* offence which is based on the number of years involved in the distortion of the contemporary integrity (in Miller's case, roughly, 275 years—"holding a candle to his shames" for recklessly moving the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution). Tricksters like Bert Brecht who try in sharp practice to shift the Hitler story to the South Side of Chicago gangsterdom (the *Führer* comes to power in 1933, but Al Capone shoots his way to the top in 1929) would be caught by my "Negative Cultural Tax", and minus three-or-four years would be punished doubly for the obvious and premeditated interference with *chronological* justice.

Atmospherics are a thornier problem to deal with, but my "Cultural Clean Air Act" of 1989 would deal with the more obvious pollutants—Moses as Yasser Arafat, Creon as Castro, Julius Caesar as J.R., Shylock as Yuppie, Kean as Sartre, Siegfried as Jack Nicholson, Macbeth as Murdoch or Maxwell, Othello as Nelson Mandela, Faust as Einstein or Oppenheimer, Freud and Sherlock Holmes as men with golden arms. . . .

But how to deal with new, imaginative projects which are in the hopper?[1] Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*, set in an igloo somewhere near the North Pole. Terence Rattigan's *The Deep Blue Sea*, played as a submerged drama of underwater divers. Do we need extra punitive categories to capture such and similar metaphorical outrages, involving thermal or nautical displacements? And what should the noble lords (Beloff, Annan, and Quinton) be doing with all the millions?

I welcome any suggestions and advice from jurists, dramaturgists, and philanthropoids. Payment for contributions on the normal royalty scale will, of course, be adjusted by calculating similar differences in time, space, and climate, as well as the mix of mixed metaphors.

M.J.L.

[1] According to a current item of theatrical news from Bremen (where great phantasts like Peter Stein and Peter Zadek have directed), there will be yet another new production of *The Merchant of Venice*, seen now to be a tragedy of "a figure who far from his homeland becomes a stranger unto himself. . . ." Thus Shylock will be played as Othello.

My programme, in a supplementary protocol for this kind of highbrow vandalism ("transposed heads"), calls for: *(1)* a one-day strike in Stratford-on-Avon; *(2)* the breaking-off of relations with Bremen and all is "twinned cities" in Europe; *(3)* the Schlegel brothers and Ludwig Tieck, the Bard's original translators, to turn noisily in their graves; *(4)* an infliction on the part of Bremen of a violent Shakespearean tempest followed by a liberating invasion by Fortinbras's forces; and *(5)* a freezing and requisitioning of all official bank accounts which subsidise the city's *Schauspielhaus*.

Warsaw Airport

The police grow into their uniforms,
a twin-engined freighter delivers
mail from the Second World War,
a sentry taps out months
on the butt of his gun. We are waiting,
delayed through fog, hope
to be lifted Vodka in hand
to another place. There's a man
outside with a cardboard box
who keeps tossing it up past
the windows and is there wherever
it falls. The soldiers stare
at the runway, dare it to move.
A customs officer checks
his nails. Then with a heave
like giving a leg up
and over a wall the man
has lifted the box past sight
and it does not fall. He turns,
and slowly his arms are measuring
emptiness in a shrinking embrace.
Our flight is called.

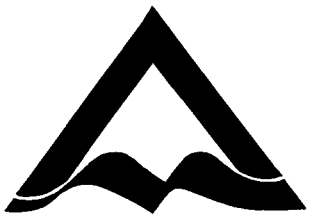
Desmond Graham

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

DOCUMENT

The Age of Repentance

By Chingiz Aitmatov



TO THIS DAY impassioned arguments continue around my novel *Plakha*, and I receive countless letters from readers. I am not able to reply to every reader; it is not possible. But I read every letter carefully, and I must try to take advantage of television to reply. The overwhelming majority of the letters warmly support, welcome and, what is more, develop some of the ideas and thoughts that I attempted to set out in *Plakha*. Nearly all deal with the subject of religion in our day. But the letters also include—they are fewer in number, but they should not be disregarded—ones which express perplexity and sometimes indignation. I should like to start by trying to reply, as it were, to my opponents.

The writers of these letters, who take a critical view of the figure of Avdiy and everything connected with religion, the perception of religion, and the Biblical stories contained in the novel, take an unequivocal and categorical stance, declaring that we are an atheistic society. These people, it seems to me, are expressing the viewpoint of a category of people who for many years were fostered and encouraged in our country. Many of them simply became professional propagandists—anti-religious propagandists, as they term themselves. By and large, they refer to the official state of affairs, as it were, saying that our state has got rid of the Church and religion—all religions, of course, and all Churches, including Islam and Buddhism, and so on.

It seems to me that they turn the famous sayings of our revolutionary classics into slogans and some kind of immutable catch-phrase, such as religion being just an opiate and nothing more. They turn a blind eye to all that came before in human culture and was brought by each of the religious teachings and currents. Many of the letters are quite sincere, and I realise that, but I think all the same that some of them realise that a cunning game is being played out. I think that in the struggle against sacred teaching, against religious teaching, a new holy teaching is being put forward: strange as it may seem, Marxist-Leninist teaching is also now seen by some as being on the level of religious dogma.

Thus the arguments adduced in the letters from these persons do not convince me. But I have no intention at all of attaching labels, because the very process of doing so shows that we are somewhere losing a fair attitude to different sides of a given phenomenon. I may be called a God-seeker and regarded as someone who is reviving religious teaching, and so on, but I don't want to reply to these readers in such a way: I understand their point of view and believe that they have a right to voice their opinions. But I shall stick to my own viewpoint. It seems to me that the sayings of our revolutionary classics should not be made into immutable canons: in the 100-150 years that have elapsed, the situation has changed many times over. Society is now quite different, and social history is not the same as it was when this or that conclusion was being drawn. So to cite and to misuse, let alone to try to make capital out of these quotations is, it seems to me, not so much improper—that is not what I mean—but unproductive. It is unproductive, it is not sensible, it is not rational.

The reason for this is that we are, after all, attempting to shape our social thinking in such a way as to make it as pluralist as possible, to give us the opportunity of enjoying great breadth in our points of view, particularly regarding culture, history, and all sorts of spiritual teaching. We are currently greatly in need of this. This need derives from the fact that the era of categorical decisions, directives and instructions, of clamping down on ideas which do not conform to official ones, has passed. This cult of categorical actions is now obsolete. I believe it is obsolete in all its forms. Thus we have to think about compensating for and filling the enormous spiritual gap, of making good the damage that we have caused to ourselves through our non-dialectical attitude to the past.

THE UPSHOT—destroyed churches in all Russian towns—is universally discussed today. Wherever you go, the residents will lament: "A splendid, beautiful church stood here. . . ." Suffice it to say that I myself have witnessed how the mosques—not Russian Orthodox churches, but mosques, which are also places of religious worship—were completely eradicated in a huge city such as Frunze. In this city of getting on for

DESPITE 70 YEARS of "state atheism" and the surrogate religion of Leninsim, the religious mentality has survived intact in the Soviet Union. In the new climate of opinion affordable by "glasnost", the Kirghiz writer CHINGIZ AITMATOV *was given the opportunity to film this quite unprecedented talk for Soviet television. Filmed on 5 November in his city of Frunze, it was broadcast on 21 December.*

Aitmatov (b. 1928) has been a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union since 1959. He is a Deputy to the USSR's Supreme Soviet and a member of the Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Soviet of Nationalities. Twice awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, he is also a winner of the Lenin Prize and various state prizes for literature; in 1978 he was created a Hero of Socialist Labour. His numerous novels and short stories include "The White Steamship", "The Lament of the Migrating Bird", and "Talkes of Mountains and Steppes" (English trans. 1972, 1978).

His novel "Plakha" (Moscow, 1987) very frankly addresses the issues of corruption, drug abuse, the planned economy, environmental policy, and the role of religion in Soviet society. It has just been published (in a translation by Natasha Ward) by Grove Press in New York and Faber and Faber in London, under the title "The Place of the Skull".

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

700,000 people, there isn't a single mosque. One mosque was established—some sort of hut was somehow adapted on an out-of-the-way street. But that is not a place of worship; a place of religious worship ought to have artistic function and an aesthetic value.

I believe that any church is a concentration of human wisdom, tranquillity, and belief in eternity. And if you go around adapting sheds, storehouses, and so on, it shows that all is not well with us. A writer friend of mine recently wrote in the press that if a tousled, nervous woman, badly or tastelessly dressed, is seen walking down the street, if she has a shrill voice and chapped hands and unattractive shoes, it is not just the fault of that woman: it shows that all is not well in that society. In a similar way, the state of a church, its place and people's attitude to it demonstrate that all is not well in this society.

In *Plakha* I attempted to show someone who in these circumstances rushes to and fro between the Christian teaching of the past, which to a large extent has evidently really become a dogmatic, dead doctrine, and an attempt to revive a new spirit. Perhaps they were naive attempts, perhaps they were the attempts of a young and inexperienced person, who hadn't lived and didn't know the world. But it is the impulses of spirit that constitute the value of the character of Avdiy. All the questions in the letters I receive constantly revolve around him. The letters keep referring to Avdiy and Pontius Pilate. The majority of letters voice the hope that the time has finally come when each person can do in peace what is necessary to meet his spiritual needs, in accordance with his conscience and convictions—be he Christian, Muslim or Buddhist.

Everyone has to be given this right. No one should persecute a person or interpret his attitude to any particular religion to his detriment and prejudice. And this is not just some kind of starry-eyed wish. It seems to me that having been through harsh stages of development—very harsh and ascetic stages—we are now seeing that this harshness leads to dehumanisation and to cultural and spiritual negation.

But if, as atheists hold, this path of denial of God and divine teaching and son on really has been cleansed of all vices and injustices, etc., why is it that our life has turned out the way it has? What about the crime rate? I want to take the most basic things, the things that are plain to see. Has the crime rate gone down? No, crime has increased, multiplied, and become even more devious. It has reached incredible dimensions.

I am not talking just about criminals who steal property on a small scale. I am also referring to crime on the level of the state. I also have in mind what happened in our top echelons. Everyone knows about it: corruption in all its varieties and forms, so to speak. It is not confined within any limits.

CAN WE REALLY say that our people are more charitable, more kind now? No, I can't say that. Even from the observations I have made during my own life, the situation is the reverse, and things are increasingly deteriorating as far as people's attitudes are concerned. I recall my childhood, adolescence and youth, and try to compare people today with the people I knew then; and the comparison does not favour the present generations. People today may be more literate—not educated, but literate: they can all read and write, they all know very well how to settle in front of the TV set and choose an interesting, recreational, and entertaining spectacle. Everyone can drive a car, and so on. But that is not culture; it does not prove anything. Robots can do exactly the same. The great primordial innermost human feeling of goodness has been lost, it has been lost to a very great extent.

WE SAY ALL THE TIME and everywhere that morality should be one of our great concerns, alongside ecology. Ecology is the first disaster, and the second disaster is the moral disaster. I think to myself: why is it that, having cast aside the gods and all theological teaching, we haven't succeeded along this path? Say what you will, all religious teaching compels people to measure their actions—and not just actions, but also thoughts—against the criterion of whether they please God.

What does "please" mean? If you take a realistic and pragmatic view, then anything goes; because whatever people do, no one has ever experienced, no one has tasted, any punishment from on high. But when you confront someone with the idea of whether something pleases God, it means: does it please your conscience, does it please genuine, elevated morality?

People must somehow examine themselves mentally and assess their thoughts and actions, or at any rate check and monitor them, and ponder, and reach an understanding of whether they are right or not. And if they are not, there must at any rate be some kind of repentance in their souls. This is something of which we have completely deprived our Soviet people—the sense of repentance. No one ever repents of anything.

As a Supreme Soviet deputy, I see a very large number of people. People come on various matters—complaints, requests, suggestions of the most varied sort. I am sometimes struck by the fact that people who commit crimes subsequently attempt somehow to play down their involvement. They have no repentance. And this makes me suspicious. What I am saying is that the cult of repentance has been completely lost. It must be reinstated, because it is one of the characteristics of man, acquired in the course of the vast path of his historical evolutionary development.

It seems to me that the period we are currently living through, this period of restructuring and *glasnost*, a period of unprecedented revival, revelation, and illumination—call it what you will—really is a renaissance for us. In the same way that we speak of the 15th century in Europe as the period of the Renaissance, our descendants may say the same about us. They may say that there were different renaissances, and this was the renaissance, the rebirth, of our whole spiritual sphere.

I think this era has dawned. People should be able to respond to the things that are being said; there must be feedback in all this. In this sense, *Plakha* helped from one point of view: I have received a very large amount of what I would call new material. I don't know if I shall have time to flesh all this out and mix it into a creative pudding. Only time will tell. But sometimes—whether they are aware of this or not—people write such wise and splendid letters that I think to myself how many unspoken thoughts there still are in our people. If they

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

could say in public what they write in their letters, what a force this would have and what impact!

Here is something else I should like to say in this regard. I am supposed to be a writer belonging to one of the nationalities, and so on, even though I also write in the Russian language. But the attitude of Russian readers in this case simply moves me, and I begin to think that, yet again, we have a completely inadequate knowledge of today's Russian people and the things they have concealed within themselves as a result of the cruel social conditions under which they have lived. In their letters they speak out openly in an astonishing fashion. The topic of internationalism emerges there, and astonishing things are said: such as the fact that we try to do things in stilted ways, repeating the same old thing time and time again. I recall the iron formula associated with literature: "National in form, Socialist in content." We rushed along with that slogan like an empty freight train for many, many decades, and we are only just discovering that it was all known to be fruitless, so to speak. That is not the approach that is needed. The same also applies to the idea of relations between nationalities, to internationalism, and to relations between religions.

Some young priests once came to my office here. We had a wide-ranging and lengthy conversation. They took a sympathetic view of my appeal that the time had come for religions not to be at odds with one another, and not to try and mutually exclude each other, but to seek a common language and combine interests. That is because war could also break out on this ground. And if it breaks out, all doctrines and ideologies will be powerless, they won't be able to do anything, they won't halt events.

I recall those young priests, young Russians, bearded, all very distinguished-looking. I must note that in the case of not just those, but also many others I have met, I am won over by their high erudition and a certain nobility. It's simply a pleasure to talk to them. And I sometimes think that these are no doubt people who act according to their genuine convictions. They go to particular religious establishments not because someone has pulled strings on their behalf, and not because mummy and daddy are taking them by their lily-white hand, but because they find their vocation in this. And they naturally attempt to master the whole range and scope of knowledge directly regarding a particular religious teaching, on the one hand; but, on the other, it is clear to them that that is not enough for people today. Thus they have vast knowledge.

And I might add that they know Marxism-Leninism somewhat better than us: their continual trump card is that they are Marxists. They have a very profound knowledge of it. I am even sometimes afraid to raise this topic with them. I think that in these spheres there is now a concentration of very interesting people, who, I find, have perhaps the most, so to say, democratic, elevated and inspired intellects, which must not be confined to some narrow sphere; there must be public access to them.

They must go out to the people, and people must be able to come to them. This should not be feared, it should not be feared. . . .

In the Event

When the cat fled past like a running cushion,
And vanished into the images on the screen,
I dropped my cup. The splash of coffee made
A wider stain on the flagstones than seemed
Quite possible, a large, seared cat-shape
We could not erase for some time. And the cup smashed.
So I said: Take the bits out into the garden
And deposit them with the rest. Our family is
Accustomed to responding with fright or shock
If a fire recalls its burning, and the flames
Die back to kindling wood and unlit coals;
And accustomed to breaking a plate, or bowl, or dish
If one walks upstairs with it during a heat-wave noon
And opens a bedroom window on to moonlit snow. . . .
We are thoroughly used to whatever happens here;
Which is why our garden is a rubbish trove
Of crockery pieces back to toga times
And beyond them, to broken arrows and fumbled flints.
So I said: Drop the fragments out in the garden,
And I will stroll along the long gallery,
Calling my ancestors severally out of their frames
To assemble on the terrace. In tall-heeled boots,
And buckled shoes, and sandals, and calloused feet,
They shall tread the patterned pieces into the ground.

Alan Brownjohn

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THEATRE

Fat Plays, or Thin?

By Malcolm Rutherford

IF SOMEBODY put it to you that Noël Coward is Britain's third playwright, you would, I think, find it quite hard to refute the argument and may end up by accepting it. Of the first, there is no doubt. And there would not by now be a great deal of dissent about the second: it is George Bernard Shaw. But once you accept that, it becomes ever more difficult to deny the third place to Coward. The case for Shaw is not that he wrote some—or indeed any—of the greatest plays in the English language. He did not. At least a dozen writers must have produced works far better than anything that came from GBS: Marlowe, Jonson, Congreve, Sheridan and Wilde, for examples. None of them, however, was exactly prolific in his contributions to the theatre. The case for Shaw is his sustained professionalism and the sheer volume of his output. It is the same for Coward.

Owing to a couple of West End productions in the last few months, it is possible that we are beginning to see Coward in a new light. *Easy Virtue,* written in 1924, has been scarcely performed for years, and its revival came as a kind of discovery. (Apparently, Coward did not so much dislike the play at the time as the way the leading lady played her part.) *The Vortex* was written in 1923 and began a star-studded revival at the Garrick Theatre in late January.

Two facts emerge from both. One is that any view of Coward as being solely the purveyor of bright, witty social comedy is inadequate. If not all human life is there, there are certainly plenty of social and psychological stresses and strains within segments of the class system. And not all of it is particularly funny: especially not funny ha-ha. Nor, one suspects, was it meant to be in the original productions.

The other fact is how apparent it is that Coward was not *sui generis,* nor even just a product of his time. He fits firmly into the English theatrical tradition. Whole scenes in both *The Vortex* and *Easy Virtue* have their origins not just in relatively recent predecessors, like Oscar Wilde and Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, but also in Shakespeare.

It may be said that we knew all that before, or that if we did not, we should have done. I am not so sure. Not everyone nowadays knows the entire volume of Coward's work, precisely because it was so large. But one person who might have been more right than wrong about his place in the theatre was Coward himself. He wrote in the introduction to the first volume of his *Collected Plays* that *Hay Fever* (1925) had been received as follows: "The Press naturally and inevitably described it as 'thin', 'tenuous' and 'trivial', because those are their stock phrases for anything later in date and lighter in texture than *The Way of the World.*" He adds that it ran "tenuously and triumphantly for a year".

Hay Fever was one of Coward's best pure comedies, and has been frequently performed by amateurs as much as professionals. But there is a certain bitterness in Coward's remark which is worth dwelling on. He obviously felt it deeply, for he also made it in the course of *Design for Living* (1933), in my view one of the best plays of the lot.

Leo has become a successful playwright and is reading through the reviews of his latest first night.

> LEO (reading the *Daily Mirror*): "*Change and Decay* is gripping throughout. The characterisation falters here and there, but the dialogue is polished and sustains a high level from first to last and is frequently witty, nay, even brilliant—"
>
> GILDA: I love "Nay".
>
> LEO (still reading): "But"—here we go, dear!—"But the play, on the whole, is decidedly thin."
>
> GILDA: My God! They've noticed it.
>
> LEO (jumping up): Thin—thin! What do they mean, "thin"?
>
> GILDA: Just thin, darling. Thin's thin all the world over and you can't get away from it.
>
> LEO: Would you call it thin?
>
> GILDA: Emaciated.
>
> LEO: I shall write fat plays from now onwards.

That exchange says a lot. It is amusing, immensely *actable*—the key word, I think, about Noël Coward—and mildly satirical. (Note that the mythical work is called *Change and Decay.*) It goes on to mention what *The Times* said about Leo's play: Leo sums up its review as "non-committal, but amiable. A minute, if slightly inaccurate, description of the plot". Then he adds: "They seem to have missed the main idea." Yet if you remember the earlier quotation from Coward's introduction, there is an underlying bitterness, or at least puzzlement, about the judgment of the critics.

WHAT IS A THIN PLAY and what is a fat play—which today might be called a meaty play—and who is to be the arbiter? Is a fat play necessarily better than a thin play? It is also striking that in his introduction to his *Collected Plays* Coward makes reference to William Congreve, not to Oscar Wilde: *The Way of the World* rather than *The Importance of Being Earnest.* In other words, he is setting his sights high, wishing to be compared not just to the recent past, but to the longer sweep of English theatre.

The basic question he raises is this: are Noël Coward's plays thin? I shall duck it for this reason: it is a pretentious question, to which any answer would be in any case subjective. The real question is whether a play stands up on stage: whether actors

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and producers will enjoy putting it on, and audiences will enjoy seeing it. The quality is in the writing, the actability, the capacity to take an audience with you.

By those criteria, of the two recent London productions, *Easy Virtue* is a better play than *The Vortex,* whatever Coward may have thought himself. *Easy Virtue* is about the contrast between cosmopolitan and county lives, and their overlaps. It concludes that the twain do not like meeting too often, and certainly not for long. Although it also has its subtleties—the county family is itself open to schism and neuroticism—it does not seek to go much deeper than that: but it is still quite poignant; social drama as much as social comedy.

A JUDGMENT ON *The Vortex* as seen in 1989 must be inevitably different from when it was first performed in the mid-1920s. It was a controversial play in its time because one of the central characters is revealed to be taking drugs. If it were the 1920s and if you had never seen or read it before, the line where this comes into the open could be quite shocking, even electric. Helen, a character whose role in the play seems largely to be sympathetic and understanding, suddenly says to Nicky with studied casualness: "All the same, I should give up drugs if I were you." Today, we know that in advance, so much of the drama is lost.

Yet I wonder if it was nearly such a good play, even at the time, as Coward thought it was. *The Vortex* is essentially a thin play posing as a fat one. It is rather a seamy melodrama. The beautiful Flo Lancaster refuses to admit that she is growing older, and takes younger and younger lovers relative to her own age. That, in turn, drives her son Nicky to drugs. There is a final confrontation in which she promises to try to give up her lovers, while he says that he will drop the opium, or whatever. This last scene is obviously intended to be deadly serious. Coward is not very good at that.

Nevertheless, *The Vortex* tells one a great deal about Coward. It places him firmly in the line of Pinero and Wilde: dramatists who tried to show that the upper middle classes had social problems and were capable of going almost mad, yet dealt with them in the confines of what came to be called drawing-room comedy. (It is wrong to think of Wilde solely as the author of *The Importance of Being Earnest*; his other plays are much more intense.)

The final scene of *The Vortex* is also worth looking at in more detail, for it is plainly modelled on the bedroom scene in *Hamlet,* where Hamlet confronts his mother about falling for Claudius.

True, Nicky does not have Hamlet's strength of language. There is nothing about "honeying and making love" in "the rank sweat of an enseamed bed". And Nicky does not quite use Hamlet's words about the need to be cruel in order to be kind. If he had, the plagiarism would have been outright. But no one could see the two scenes without noting that they have something in common. Coward clearly drew on Hamlet and Gertrude, and would have known that an audience would catch the similarity. That is what I mean about him taking himself seriously and being aggrieved when people called his plays "thin".

IT IS NOT ENTIRELY Coward's fault that *The Vortex* has not worn well. He could not have foreseen, for example, that a play which daringly warns about drugs would now look odd when most of the characters spend most of the time smoking cigarettes, and even talking about them. Flo Lancaster refuses one brand because, she says, her young lover has "a special rather hearty kind that I adore". The swing away from smoking has been one of the great social changes of our time. You can almost date a movie by the cigarette consumption alone.

It has also become exceptionally difficult to portray elegance on stage, perhaps because perceptions of elegance have risen along with the general increase in affluence, but also because Hollywood does it so much better. *The Vortex* is meant to thrive on elegance; so is the Garrick production. But if one looks at it closely for a minute or two, it seems pretty tatty. That may be unavoidable. Hollywood gets away with it by rapid switches of scene. In the theatre you tend to be stuck with a set for at least twenty minutes. That means that the elegance has to come from the text and the acting.

The dialogue in *The Vortex* is not brilliant. About the best exchange is a lady saying: "I've got a frightful headache", to which the response from Helen is: "Why don't you take off your hat?" It might have been said by a stand-up comic on Blackpool pier, but that is why Coward at his best is so good. If you can play Blackpool, you can play anywhere.

This relative lack of enthusiasm both for *The Vortex* as play and for the current production should not be misunderstood. The interesting fact is that he wrote it at all. It added to the range as well as the volume of his output, and that enhances the claim that he is Britain's third playwright.

When E. M. Forster wrote in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927) about the distinction between round and flat characters, he specifically did not denigrate the art that went into creating the flat. It is the same with thin and fat plays. Noël Coward's best plays are what some critics would call thin. But there are lines and situations in them that will never be forgotten. Some of them are almost too unbearably memorable to quote: "England won't 'arf seem funny without the Queen", from *Cavalcade*. "Very flat, Norfolk", from *Private Lives* has passed into the language as a way of communicating something on which one would not dwell in detail. No need to dwell either on: "Extraordinary how potent cheap music is." Yet you may have forgotten this one from *Design for Living:*

> OTTO: Funny, how much in love with you I was!
> GILDA: We'll have a good laugh about it when you've finished your pudding.

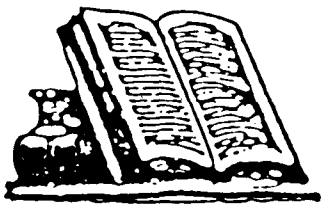
The art that went into that was not thin at all: it was totally professional, and it was lasting. Coward's poetic equivalent was Rudyard Kipling. In novels it was P. G. Wodehouse. Between them they gave immense pleasure, and their words have stuck.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IN THE MARGIN

A 19th-Century Thatcherite?

By Anthony Hartley



It is a curious feature of the present debate on what is happening to British society that so much of it should take the form of the establishment of a sort of moral league-table, on which trades and professions are ranked by the degree of "goodness" to which they can lay claim. The activities of clergymen, social workers, health service employees, school and university teachers are often described as "good" or "caring"; those of bankers, lawyers, stockbrokers and doctors working in private medicine as "selfish" or "money-grabbing". Selling themselves to the Mammon of unrighteousness, these unfortunates suffer the penalties of moral disapproval on the part of enlightened intellectuals. Even within the Civil Service there is a dividing line. The Security Services and the Ministry of Defence are given over to the deeds of darkness. The Ministries of Health and Social Services encounter none of this suspicion. Their soundness of heart is sufficiently proved by a flow of documents, leaked by dribs and drabs for the benefit of the critics of government.

This form of modern dualism is much practised by intellectuals. If Ormazd and Ahriman are to fight their battles in British society, it must be comforting to feel that one is on the side of light.

Such reflections have their relevance to the state of mind of Professor Bernard Williams who, from the prosperous shores of San Francisco Bay, has recently denounced the Minister for Higher Education, Robert Jackson, as a "traitor" (to the country? To All Souls?). For, naturally, a conviction that someone is engaged in "doing good" must be accompanied by a feeling that those who deny the unlimited funds necessary for these purposes are, in some sense, evil or corrupt. Mr Jackson is trying to do his best with a situation from which Professor Williams has fled. But that makes no difference. *"Écrasez l'infâme"* is a good enough device for a professor of philosophy, and stoutly he goes to it in his Californian retreat. As for Mr Jackson, he must strive to make the best of his fallen state, along with the rest of us, whose occupations, while appearing modestly useful to ourselves (for we are all in need of a "life-lie"), cannot provide that strong assurance of being about the Lord's business felt by so many Pharisees.

It is strange that those who adopt this dualistic approach to the components of society often also call for a renewed "sense of community" in Britain today. A "sense of community" is the great panacea or social pain-killer of our time, but it is hard to reconcile with the relegation of most working people to the ranks of the "selfish" or "money-grabbing".

Oddly enough, the best refutation of such attitudes is to be found in an essay on "Doing Good" which was published anonymously in 1862 in a book called *Essays by a Barrister*. This sets out to answer the accusations made by those who claim to belong to the "caring professions" against everyone else. It is worth some quotation. What is the meaning behind the phrase "doing good"?

> "It insinuates that the mainspring of professional zeal is personal ambition; that commerce and agriculture are mere embodiments of avarice; and that, in a word, selfishness is the vital principle of almost every part of society."

Such a point of view is injurious in that "it has a strong practical tendency to discredit the common occupations of life . . ." and "does so on the false ground that pursuits which benefit the person who follows them up are selfish". On the contrary:

> "A stockbroker who passes the whole day in buying and selling shares, or a publican who is constantly occupied in serving his customers, passes his time in doing good just as much as the most zealous clergyman or sister of mercy."

Human society is a complex organic whole, but "if the object ultimately produced by the combined efforts of all is in itself a good one, it cannot be denied that whatever is essential to its production is good also".

Finally, the writer gives his own version of the "do-gooder's" characteristics, sketching a picture which, even today, is far from unrecognsiable:

> "He is more exposed than almost any other person to the danger of becoming pedantic and petty, and of trying to realize his own conceptions of what people ought to be and to do, instead of learning how slight and narrow those conceptions are. Benevolence is constantly cultivated by philanthropists at the expense of modesty, truthfulness, and consideration for the rights and feelings of others; for by the very fact that a man devotes himself to conscious efforts to make people happier and better than they are, he asserts that he knows better than they what are the necessary constituent elements of happiness and goodness. In other words he sets himself up as their guide and superior."

The argument is obvious enough—apart from the fact that nobody recently has cared to make it in so trenchant a form—but the style has a flavour of its own. It is the style of an advocate—tart, cutting and rational.

In fact, the author of *Essays by a Barrister* was Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, the uncle of Virginia Woolf, a distinguished barrister and judge, the historian of English criminal law and legal member of the Viceroy's Council in India. His main political work was *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity* (1873), a reply to John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*. It is hard to find a copy of *Essays by a Barrister* since, to my knowledge, it has never

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been reprinted.[1] This is a pity, since it contains much wisdom and originality. There is about Stephen's approach to the subjects of the day a downright and even brutal common sense, which enables him to brush aside fashionable cant and disinter the facts of a case from the layers of sentimentality with which they are surrounded. What is disclosed is often disagreeable and unwelcome to those accustomed to view human nature through a rosy mist. Stephen is adept at exposing the flaws in individual behaviour, the consequences of the use of power in society and the need for crime to be followed by punishment.

"I do not think", he wrote in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, "the State ought to stand bandying compliments with pimps." Liberty for him—and this was the centre of his answer to Mill—was determined by power: ". . . it is only under the protection of a powerful, well-organised, and intelligent government that any liberty can exist at all." Nor was religion exempt from this condition of social existence: ". . . if Christianity had had no threats and used no intimidation, there would have been no metropolitan deans. Religions are not founded on mildness and benevolence."

Stephen was a utilitarian who believed in the need for a strong state. He also possessed a puritanical temperament. It is recorded that "he once smoked a cigar and found it so delicious that he never smoked again". He was a believer in the supreme importance of individual exertion and self-control. "A life made up of danger, vicissitude, and exposure is the sort of life which produces originality and resource." His view of the state was very much that of Hobbes: its task was primarily to ensure defence against foreign enemies and civil order at home. The state as a purveyor of welfare and the source of public benevolence he might have regarded as a dangerously enervating institution. He valued hard work, independence of mind, a virile and energetic grappling with life. If the human condition was difficult and men potentially wicked, then all the more courage and effort were required from the individual. Stephen was very conscious of the dangerous side of political activity and of the irrationality inseparable from it. "Disguise it how you will, it is force in one shape or another which determines the relations between human beings", was his chilly verdict.

HE WAS a Puritan, but it would be hard to say he was religious. His view of the Churches was of organisations intended to aid the State in its task of social control. But he was conscious of the power represented by religion. "Millions upon millions of men, women, and children", he wrote in *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, "believe in Mohammed to the point of regulating their whole life by his law. How many people have understood Adam Smith? Did anybody . . . ever feel any enthusiasm about him?"

It was Stephen's predilection for practical activity which made him impatient of those whose business it was to preach to others. It was ordinary life that attracted him, and he found high sentiments, whether in church or lecture-hall, hard to bear. His essay "Juniores Priores", on the relationship between teacher and student, shows how difficult he found it to be fair to those who claimed to make disciples of the young:

> "There is no one thing which it is more important for persons connected with education to remember than the truth that education is only a preparation for life, and that the life which lies beyond it is utterly unlike it, is very partially known to anyone, and is, in general, particularly little known to themselves."

There is in this a hit at John Henry Newman, whose often sentimental romanticism he found antipathetic. In his essay on what he called "Gamaliels" (and we would now call "gurus"), he expressed the view that "it is unwise for a man who cares for the investigation of the truth to address himself to the young. . . ." Here he is in agreement with Benjamin Jowett who remarked of Newman's conversion, "It was very unfair to those young men". Jowett himself was more an informal civil service commissioner than a Gamaliel. At any rate, he escaped Stephen's condemnation.

THE RELEVANCE of what Stephen has to say to the present day is unquestionable. For we appear to be living in the age of the militant professor. A spate of advice, admonition and rebuke pours from the universities towards Whitehall. Yet much of it—the gallons of ink that have been wasted on proportional representation, for instance—betrays an apparent unworldliness, a distance from real affairs which gives substance to Stephen's criticism.

Yet it is not only this which makes his writing seem modern. Much has been written about Mrs Thatcher and Victorian values. But the moment the names Arnold, Carlyle, Mill, Newman are pronounced, it is hard to perceive much sympathy or identity of opinion. Fitzjames Stephen, on the other hand, is far closer to the present Prime Minister's habit of mind than any other Victorian intellectual. His puritan utilitarianism, his cult of personal effort, his austere respect for achievement through hard work make of him a 19th-century Thatcherite—perhaps the only one.

The 1860s and 1870s were a time when the Victorians were beginning to lose something of the initial toughness which had carried them into empire and industrial expansion. Under the influence of Carlyle and Arnold what might be called a philanthropic consensus had arisen, which played no small part in making England a less harsh and more humane place, but which may have brought with it a certain slackening of energies. Fitzjames Stephen reacted against this trend, much of which appeared to him as cant, by reasserting the vital qualities which he saw as essential to the national existence. Of course, any comparison between him and Mrs Thatcher is absurd. He was a speculative thinker of great power and she is a practical politician, adept in the adjustments which politics requires. None the less, to read his works is to come across the best arguments for her struggle against a liberal consensus. Such unexpected meetings are only one of the benefits to be gained from a knowledge of the past.

[1] My copy was found for me by Wildy & Sons Ltd., the law booksellers beneath the arch at the entrance to Lincoln's Inn. I had my name down with them for twelve years before a copy turned up. That they should have remembered my request after so long a passage of *time seems to me a remarkable example of service*. It is uncommon enough to deserve a mention.

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LETTERS

Whose Oyster?

READING Kenneth Minogue's critique of Margaret Drabble's Fabian pamphlet ("The Preoccupation with Equality", ENCOUNTER, November 1988), I am tired to see the old *laissez-faire* arguments levelled for the thousandth time against the old socialist arguments. Fabian socialism cannot, of course, refute this apology of capitalism, being wrong along with it and sharing a common preoccupation that Professor Minogue has detected: namely, one with material pseudo-values. That is to his credit, but he fails to show that it is the same oysters that keep the good old practical capitalism going.

Let me go through some of his reflections from this starting-point. I was most depressed to find even the ancient "don't-like-it-go-to-Russia" trick here. I have lived behind the Curtain, but I would never say that those societies are "egalitarian". In fact, they function for the sake of a minuscule minority which holds absolute power over the rest. They are egalitarian only in socialist-capitalist terms: nobody has lots of oysters over there. Mind you, *perestroika* may change even that.

Complete material equality is not only unattainable but undesirable because it endangers diversity of life-style, from which every progress originates. But misery is not a life-style. He whose income is just enough to buy food and shelter is not free to spend it how he likes. Worse, for this he is made to sell the energy of his body for about a quarter of his productive lifetime. Material inequality, in itself desirable, thus in the extreme leads to inequality of freedom and honour which touches me. It is this coercion that, for me, capitalism means. Better than other forms of coercion, but still one; and coercion is the opposite of freedom.

SOMEONE will say that all this is no business of governments, and let the lucky among us care and share on their own. Life-styles may not be, but freedom emphatically is, the business of governments. It was the business of the United States to abolish slavery, for example. An individual idealistic action, like freeing one's slaves, was futile when a large part of the society preferred slavery. One can share money if one has it, but not freedom and honour—these can be conferred only by the society at large. Unfortunately, socialism since Marx could not have cared less about freedom. If, and only if, it can break this tradition (I doubt it) I can one day call myself a socialist. Otherwise, it is high time to invent a new ism.

Finally, I am completely clear that I am not being at all "practical". I think that practicality is not an inherent property of ideas, but a relation between ideas and the world we live in. Ideas may be impractical for the world, or the world may be impractical for the ideas. Which is at fault? Nor do I have the least tendency to impose anything on anybody. Disagreement about the basics does not necessarily lead to violence, nor to sympathy with violence.

IVAN TESAR

Pasadena
California

MR TESAR covers a lot of ground. Let me make three comments. He transposes my observation that Communist totalitarianism in this century has been inspired by the idea of equality into "the ancient don't-like-it-go-to-Russia. trick". No question of a trick. Rather, in this kind of dispute, egalitarians bend every effort to keep such ugly matters off the agenda, while critics want to insist that the despotism at the end of the egalitarian road is evidence of its real character. There is an important question here; should one say that Mr Tesar has missed a trick?

Mr Tesar clearly cares about freedom and honour, and so do I. But he thinks it is affected by material inequality, and "conferred by society". I would rather emphasise the courage and determination of individuals.

Finally, I take practicality to be a character of questions and the issues they raise. The idea of equality, like any other, can be treated either theoretically, or practically. But it is hard to see egalitarianism as anything else but practical.

KENNETH MINOGUE

London

Chesterton & Racism?

CONVERTED "with a satisfying click of relief" to Distributism some years ago, by an encounter with the now defunct Chesterton Society of South Australia (which survived for many years thanks to the strength of spirit of Paul Maguire's widow Margaret), I enjoyed McNamara's and Dennis O'Keefe's article "Roots of Madness" (ENCOUNTER September-October 1988).

Since Distributism, though it says to both communism and capitalism "a plague o' both your houses", lives in a world where these two are the opposed mass madnesses of the majority, its adherents are fated to show their residual sympathy with one or other of these.

My own sympathy is with the parties that have championed the oppressed, no inverted commas. I am not sure I would risk calling Distributism "popular capitalism" (if I had to invent alternatives, I would call it cooperative capitalism and popular private property,) nor quote the prophet of monetarism with approval in its support. I am happy when McNamara and O'Keeffe even up the balance a little by quoting an anarchist in support of Chesterton's criticism of trend-blinded intellectuals, sad when they include feminism among blind intellectual trends.

Saddest of all when they reveal a sympathy with intellectual racism . . . . The Australian National Front cites, for its revolting racist attitudes, the new approaches of the British National Action, which openly adopts Chesterton as one of its prophets. Post-Holocaust racism is a phenomenon Chesterton did not foresee in his political crystal ball. Pro-English though he was, he was surely too deeply Christian and personalist to have done other, had he foreseen it, than reject it with the loathing it deserves. One hates to have him associated with it.

KEVIN MAGAREY

Wayville
South Australia

WE ARE HAPPY that Kevin Magarey enjoyed our account of distributism, sad that he has made up an article which we didn't write, sadder still about his dragging in the National Front, saddest of all about his confusion of mind. Surely a little robust Chestertonian common sense should have cured him of all this by now? The article we *actually* wrote concerned Chesterton's various battles with obsessive 20th-century intellectuals. Race is barely mentioned except to opine that current anti-racist fanatics demonstrate a similar narrowness of vision.

Mr Magarey seems to illustrate this charge, cobbling together phrases torn out of unrelated contexts to come up with a new truly original sin, "intellectual racism". Is this some hitherto undiscovered Antipodean variety? His letter is surely right about one thing, Chesterton cannot be implicated. Aside from some favourable comments in *The Everlasting Man*, there are no grounds for believing that he was particularly interested in Aboriginal culture, though he might have had some sharp words to say to those who use it to make Western-style political points.

JAMES MCNAMARA,
DENNIS O'KEEFFE

London

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Newsworthy

I WONDER whether *M*'s evocative column is right in, by implication, attributing originality to Ray Ventura's recitation: *Tout va bien, Madame la Marquise*. Is it not possible that the American Frank Crumit's record *No News* came first (the negro chauffeur reporting in very similar terms to his returning boss—"No Sir, no Sir, there ain't no noos . . .")? May I invite him to research the matter further, anyhow?

It was at the same time a pleasure to read in that context his passing reference to the incomparable "Bétove", whose musical impersonations used to delight us in the 1930s. Indeed, I should be happy to donate to *M* my two (literally) priceless 78 records of *Folies Musicales* and *Pastiches Musicaux*, on the understanding that we share the profits of their eventual sale. This, in gratitude for all his hard work over the years, under various guises, in advising us so authoritatively what books/films to read/see—and still more important, not to!

MICHAEL CULLIS
European Cultural Foundation
London

The Gorbachov Phenomenon

TO A WESTERN visitor, the communist countries often seem to resemble Balnibarbi and the Flying Island of Laputa as encountered by Jonathan Swift's Gulliver. The newly converted zealots from Laputa, we are told, "fell into schemes of putting all arts, sciences, languages onto a new foot" and, having established "academics" in every town "of any consequence", they then

> ". . . contrive new rules and methods of agriculture and building, and new instruments and tools for all trades and manufactures; whereby, as they undertake, one man shall do the work of ten: a palace may be built in a week, of materials so durable, as to last forever without repairing. All the fruits of the earth shall come to maturity, at whatever season we think fit to chuse, and encrease an hundred fold more than they do at present; with innumerable other happy proposals. The only inconvenience is that none of these projects are yet brought to perfection; and, in the mean time, the whole country lies miserably waste; the houses in ruins, and the people without food or clothes: by all of which instead of being discouraged, they (the zealots) are fifty times more violently bent on prosecuting their schemes."

Of course, Laputa now has a new King, and since his coronation a veritable cottage industry has burgeoned amongst Western journalists and university political departments striving to make sense of the tea-leaves and divine to what extent his zealous manoeuvrings and strategic pronouncements will provide the necessary "food or clothes" and bring "to perfection" traditional Laputan ideologies, or whether he has genuinely broken the mould and transmogrified himself into a Houyhnhnm.

IN MY SEARCH for guidance in this respect, I looked forward to reading George Urban's conversation with Milovan Djilas (ENCOUNTER, September/October and November 1988). His penetrating insights into the practices—and malpractices—of Communism, and his acerbic, often almost aphoristic style make Djilas a writer from whom I have learned a great deal in the past. And yet, at the end of the first part, I did not feel much the wiser and was left with the impression that Djilas' assessment of the Gorbachov phenomenon was bifocal to say the least. Of course, in view of the complexity of the political and economic issues under discussion, it is important to be wary of simplistic solutions. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a crucial contradiction in Djilas' comments that I was unable to resolve.

On the one hand there was the familiar Djilas:

> "The essence of any Communist system is the monopolistic rule of society by the Communist Party. . . . Communism cannot . . . transform itself into a free society. . . . Communism of the Soviet type is and will always remain totalitarian."

In the same interview, however, he also states that Gorbachov is evidence that

> ". . . certain indigenous Communist Parties, notably the Yugoslav and the Soviet, have sufficient inner resources left in them to shed the Stalinist incrustations and make a fresh start. The Soviet Party did have democratic features in its early history. Gorbachov is trying to water that dessicated plant and revive it."

Djilas does concede that this type of democracy would hardly be recognisable as such to those weaned on Western liberalism, but he then states that Gorbachov "doesn't believe in the control of the people by authority. He thinks the population ought to and can control itself once it has been given the facts."!

IT IS ONE thing to listen to those well-meaning commentators, whom Shostakovich would have described sarcastically as "those great Western humanists" telling us, as the BBC news did recently, of "the new spirit of freedom" in the USSR. It is another to hear from a hardened campaigner such as Djilas that the General Secretary and President is a well-intentioned liberal of sorts battling against a corrupt and reactionary old guard.

So what conclusions can be drawn from all this by an interested layman such as myself, who hopes to see Russia, together with its empire and satellites, develop into a pluralist democracy founded on the basic human rights we take for granted, without having to endure civil war and anarchy? Perhaps I may be permitted to add a few comments of my own.

FIRST, the loudly trumpeted "liberalisation" that has taken place under Gorbachov has undoubtedly produced some tangible results, though more for the intellectuals' collective peace of mind than the man in the Soviet street. Gorbachov's anti-alcoholism campaign has been a disastrous failure, and the economic situation has, if anything, worsened. Furthermore, the political, economic and cultural subjects now being given an airing, and the parameters by which they can be discussed are still controlled very much from the top. The Party retains control over all legal media channels, and thus over what is made public within the USSR. Discussion may now take place on certain hitherto taboo subjects, and, as Gorbachov's recent Siberian adventures indicate, may even almost backfire. The conclusions never fail to vindicate the wonderful policies of *perestroika* and

WE NOTE, *with regret and deep sadness, the passing of* ENCOUNTER *contributors and friends in 1988*

ROBERT SHAPLEN
KARL A. WITTFOGEL
HAMISH HAMILTON
GERHARD GOLDBERG

T. E. UTLEY
IRIS ORIGO
MICHAEL GOODWIN
FRANCIS WATSON

MARGHANITA LASKI
GEORGE SCOTT
YULI DANIEL
JEREMY HADFIELD
JOHN MORGAN

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glasnost, however, and all criticism of the leader himself remains firmly taboo.

SECONDLY, Gorbachov seems to have gained some propaganda points by rehabilitating certain victims of Stalin's purges and striving to banish the ghost of the Great Leader and Teacher in favour of Lenin. It should not be forgotten, however, that Lenin, together with Trotsky and most of the Old Bolsheviks now rehabilitated, was a mass-murderer who laid the foundations of Stalinism. Indeed, as Djilas said in 1979, the word Stalinism is a "misnomer"; it is "Leninism pushed to the limit of its awesome rationale". Would those Western commentators who welcomed this rehabilitation process be so benevolent if Helmut Kohl were to rehabilitate Röhm and the SA?

More importantly, though, since its inception, the empire these Old Bolsheviks created has been bursting to disintegrate, and is held together, not by a democratic consensus or the rule of law, but by the violent oppression of the Red Army and the *KGB*. Any reforms that shift real power away from this totalitarian centre will therefore undermine the very existence of the Soviet Union, as recent events in Kazakhstan, Soviet Armenia and Latvia suggest, and will ultimately not be tolerated.

SO, IF GORBACHOV is sincere in his alleged will to devolve power and introduce genuine long-term reforms, he will preside over the break-up of the USSR. He will deserve credit as the first Communist head of state to commit political suicide voluntarily and should perhaps therefore be given every encouragement!

If, however, he is a pragmatic Leninist, committed to increasing the wealth and efficiency of the Kremlin power machine both at home and abroad, we shall continue to need a long spoon if we are to sit at his table. Optimists will hope that his embryonic reforms will begin to gather a momentum of their own and make it impossible for the régime to revert to its former, or indeed current practices. Others might prefer the view that before genuine reforms can take root, the system—whether in the form of Gorbachov himself, the Army or the *KGB*—will precipitate a pseudo-Stalinist backlash under the auspices of consolidating *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Time will tell.

On a slightly different tack, Gorbachov's openness seems to consist of stating a few facts that have been obvious for years—for instance that the USSR is backward and bankrupt—and then blaming everyone else for them, whether it is Brezhnev or, incredibly, the Soviet press. Of course, for a leader to vilify his predecessor(s) is nothing new in the history of the Soviet Union. The question is, therefore, whether Gorbachov is really offering anything radically new.

How genuine, and far-reaching, is Gorbachov's desire for reform? The plan to withdraw the Party from certain decision-making bodies and industrial units may well improve efficiency and reduce the hitherto suffocating duplication of bureaucratic channels. But how tangible will any political reforms actually be, given that the President will be the General Secretary of the Party, and that no other political party will be permitted to put forward candidates for elections?

Does he plan to grant Soviet citizens the freedom to travel freely within and without the USSR, to associate and assemble peacefully, to teach independent ideas, to participate in multi-party elections by secret ballot, to publish independent newspapers and books, to establish independent radio and television stations, to check the independence of the courts or to form free trade unions? Will he abolish forced labour, officially sanctioned torture and beatings, indefinite detention without charge, the compulsory teaching of Marxism-Leninism, the censorship of mail etc, the state control of art or the policy of stripping dissidents of their nationality and deporting them? To my knowledge there is little evidence that the answer to any of these will be anything but a firm "No".

The crisis in Soviet Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the recent developments in Eastern Europe have provided an opportunity for Gorbachov to demonstrate just how far he is prepared to go in putting *perestroika* into practice. In Nagorno Karabakh, he played for time before vindicating the status quo and denouncing the evils of nationalism (i.e. any attempt to oppose Russian or Soviet hegemony). The treatment meted out to Pariur Airikyan, one of the leading secessionists, who was stripped of his Soviet citizenship and deported to Ethiopia, is hardly evidence of liberalisation, despite the increased media coverage.

IN THE SATELLITE countries of Europe we have seen régimes either mouthing the phraseology of *perestroika* whilst suppressing any suggestion of it in practice (Czechoslovakia), or simply ignoring it (East Germany, Bulgaria and Romania). Both of these reactions have been tacitly approved by Gorbachov, whose criticism of Brezhnev does not extend to the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Neither the corrupt brutality of Zhivkov or Ceaucescu, the grey neo-Stalinism of Honecker, nor the disastrous incompetence of the Jaruzelski régime have been exposed to any explicit attacks from Moscow. Gorbachov's priority, here, as elsewhere, has been the preservation of Communist, and thus Soviet, rule. Gorbachov's publicly stated view that he is happy to see the socialist countries of Europe develop in their own way merely supports the status quo and does not exactly go far in shifting the focus of power.

Because of that power, the Western governments are obliged to negotiate and "do business" with Gorbachov. Of that there can be no doubt. None the less, we should be sceptical of attempts to cast him in the role of a scared cow—or rather horse—as a Houyhnhnm in Balnibarbi. To continue the Swiftian analogy, surely we should be encouraging not the Kings of Laputa, but the Lord Minodis. We should be pushing for genuine self-determination for the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, including the Ukraine and the Baltic States, and the introduction of a multi-party democracy in the rest of the Soviet Union. In the words of Viktor Kravchenko, we should be supporting the "progressive and socially minded people everywhere who help in the struggle for a free, democratic Russia, without which there can be no enduring peace on earth".

JOHN D. HALLIDAY

Edinburgh

Where Keynes Went Wrong

DAVID GLASNER'S contribution entitled "Where Keynes Went Wrong" (ENCOUNTER, December 1988) is flawless—well, almost flawless! The bulk of Mr Glasner's article is a meticulous and well-researched piece on Keynes's contribution to economic policy.

But, at the end, Mr Glasner loses it. He states that monetarism (a.k.a. the quantity theory of money) attempts "to achieve price stability by providing the economy with *precisely* the amount of additional money needed to offset the growth of real output". (Emphasis added.) Please, name a monetarist who holds this.

In reality, monetarists hold nearly the opposite. That is, monetarists hold that, in the short run, the demand for money is both *unstable* and *unpredictable*. Hence, an optimal monetary policy is simply to provide a constant monetary growth and to avoid any attempts to fine-tune the economy.

PAUL D'ANDREA

Oak Lawn
Illinois

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
The Grange Press
Butts Road, Southwick, Sussex

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Life & Letters Today

London

SUPPLY AND DEMAND: **Britain's tiny tots have negotiated giant pocket money increases in the past year, happily ignoring all Uncle Nigel's warnings about the dangers of excessive growth in the money supply.**

The under-11s in Northern Ireland have squeezed a rise of 65% out of their parents in the past year, their Scottish branch has stuck out for an extra 21%, and those in south Wales and the West have pocketed an extra 22.9%. The fat cats in London managed a rise of just 2.7%.

But unlike many of their superiors, children seem to know that it is a good idea to save at least some of their income. About half the children questioned said the main reason for saving was for "a rainy day". This was particularly so among London children.

Those financial institutions engaged in a battle to attract the budding financiers of tomorrow may not be pleased to hear that children's main concern when opening a savings account is "a good rate of interest". Astonishingly, 46% of the under-fives said they were looking for the highest yield on their savings, while they were the least likely to be attracted by offers of Donald Duck, Snoopy or Garfield money boxes.

THE INDEPENDENT

New York

PALINDROMANIA: *U Nu, the former leader of Burma, is back in the news [writes William Safire]. He was the Last Palindrome—the only recent head of government whose name is spelled the same backwards as forward. We palindromaniacs missed you—and U Nu it all along.*

NEW YORK TIMES

London

JOIST & GOETHE: **There aren't many jokes about Goethe, and I thought [Simon Callow writes) the management of the Lyric Hammersmith (putting on "Faust" last year) had annexed them all for its T-shirt campaign ("Goethe Blazes" being the most unashamed). But a friend drew my attention to a joke of Dave Allen's about an Englishman and an Irishman after a job on a building site.**

***Foreman*: Here's a little test (taking Englishman aside). What's the difference between a joist and a girder?**

***Englishman*: Easy. A girder is a beam made of iron—a joist is a beam made of wood.**

***Foreman*: Good (taking Irishman aside): Now what's the difference etc?**

***Irishman*: Easy, Joist wrote *Ulysses* and Girder wrote *Faust*.**

The joke reminded me of when I worked in the box office of the National Theatre. One that used to crack me up completely was when people asked for two tickets for "Three Sisters". Silly, I know.

THE TIMES

London

SOUND OF VILLAINY: *Fallen idol David Jenkins, once a British Olympic silver medallist and now in prison after pleading guilty to running a multi-million dollar smuggling operation supplying athletes with illegal drugs, gave a remarkably cool performance on television recently.*

One thing that puzzled me [Peter Paterson writes] was the assertion by USA government investigator, Phillip Halpern that Jenkins was discovered to be behind the smuggling racket because of his English accent.

DAILY MAIL

New York

SELLING CACOPHONY: **For people who work at home but want a background of businesslike sounds during their telephone calls, a tape recording of typewriters, adding machines, and file drawers has gone on sale in Kingston, New York, at $14.95. It was created by Laura Newman,**

> **"A customer told me it really works [she said]. "It's subliminal, and people don't question it. They just assume you're in an office."**

Ms Newman had started a business at home and worried that sounds of the television set, squabbling children and other domestic cacophony might project less than a professional image.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE

London

IN A WORD: *Officials at the Foreign Office have been quietly advised to cast about for an alternative to the term* **"conservatives"** *when referring to die-hard Kremlin opponents of Mikhail Gorbachov's reforms.*

Such application of the word is said to find ill favour with No 10.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

PEACE POEM: **British Telecom [writes John Ezard] is stopping its Dial-a-Poem service, launched with cultural fanfares several months ago, after a quarrel about whether the art is flexible enough to include such closet bards as Barbara Cartland, Frank Bruno, and the English soccer captain Bryan Robson.**

BT was all in favour because it would be good for publicity. The English Language Society, the project administrators, said yest to a week starring Ms Cartland but "drew the line", at Bruno and Robson.

The project editor, Mr John Rety, protested to BT: "If the peace of the world depended on Barbara Cartland reading her poems, I would be stupid and wicked to bar her."

Otherwise her inclusion would mean a "deprecation" for other, more purist, poets and humiliation for him. Most other poets backed Mr Rety. One, Jeremy Reed, wrote of Ms Cartland's "execrably boring" works. Nevertheless, the bestselling novelist was featured on the 25p a minute service for a week. But plans to star Bruno and Robson reading their favourite poems were dropped after the protests. The result has reaffirmed the old truth that poetry rarely thrives without publicity, star names, patronage, sponsorship or advertising.

THE GUARDIAN

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LITERARY TRADITIONS

Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition
LAWRENCE LIPKING
Foreword by
Catharine R. Stimpson

The figure of the woman forsaken has long been at the heart of poetic tradition. Lipking explores major and minor poems, from many times and translated from many languages, written by both men and women, to explain the perennial fascination of this image. He also uses the poems to compare the ways in which men imagine women and women imagine themselves.
Women in Culture and Society series

Roman Erotic Elegy
Love, Poetry, and the West
PAUL VEYNE
Translated by David Pellauer

In this witty foray into the love poems of Propertius, Tibullus, Catullus, and Ovid, Veyne asserts that the philological tradition has erred in reading them as autobiographical. He argues that elegy in ancient Rome was purely artificial and that cleverness in the use of poetic and rhetorical devices, rather than existential sincerity, was the elegists' primary goal.

The Art of Naming
ANNE FERRY

To solve the perplexities of sixteenth-century English verse, Ferry approaches its language as one very different from modern English. She notes the looseness with which the alphabet was used and the liberties taken with spelling, punctuation, and grammar, relating the different concept and experience of language at that time to the actual practices of Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney, and others.

Mary Shelley and Frankenstein
The Fate of Androgyny
WILLIAM VEEDER

In this fresh reading of both Mary Shelley and her masterpiece, Veeder emphasizes her deep concern with the harmonious balance of traits traditionally seen as "masculine" and "feminine" and the desolating polarization of these traits into machismo and weakness. "An original, stimulating, and *important* book....Neither the Shelleys nor this novel will look quite the same again."—James Rieger

All are available in paperback.

For information on these or on any of the thousands of our other books in print, write to:
5801 Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637, U.S.A.

The Historical Renaissance
New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture
HEATHER DUBROW and RICHARD STRIER, editors

The essays in this volume exemplify the ways in which modern scholars and critics are fusing what once might have been compartmentalized as "literary" and "historical" concerns. Subjects range from religious, legal, and political treatises to major literary works and topographies of London. The contributing historians and literary critics display a variety of approaches to the interplay of discursive and non-discursive phenomena.

Ezra Pound among the Poets
GEORGE BORNSTEIN, editor

"Be influenced by as many great writers as you can." So said Ezra Pound and so he was. Ten leading scholars here explore Pound's relationship to other poets—from his precursors to his contemporaries—both those who influenced him and those whom he influenced.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED